

THE
CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

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**HERDER, AND HIS LETTERS RELATING TO THE STUDY OF
DIVINITY.**

HERDER, though one of the most celebrated writers of the last part of the last century in Germany, has been very little known abroad. The chief cause of this probably is, that all his writings are composed in his own tongue; and the language and literature of the Germans have not till lately been much attended to by foreigners. It is a singular fact, that while scarcely a work of note, either in letters or the sciences, appears in English, without soon issuing in translation from the German press; our own language has been put in possession of little in return, except a few strange plays and extravagant fictions. The prejudices, which those loose writings had a great part in creating, are however wearing away fast; and men are beginning to believe that there is not a science in the whole circle, which does not owe great obligations to German genius and research. Another reason why Herder's name is no better known among us, is found in the character of his writings. Many of them are on abstract subjects; and many relate to the national literature, which he did more than any one else perhaps to redeem from the French criticism; and many are poetical, and cannot therefore well be translated. He was distinguished as a philosopher, a poet, and an interpreter of the scriptures; by the originality of his conceptions, the vigour of his judgment, the charms of his style, and especially by a quick sensibility to whatever is elevated, beautiful, and tender. *In point of religious sentiment, he belonged to the school which is called orthodox.* The "Ode to the Hebrew Prophets," of which we attempted a translation in a late

number, and which we gave as Eichhorn's, was in fact, as we have since been informed, written by Herder; and was merely prefixed, by that professor, as a sort of motto, to his last celebrated work.

In 1780, he published "Letters relating to the Study of Divinity," which soon came to a second edition, and were much read. We subjoin a translation of the first of these; intending, though without meaning to pledge ourselves, to translate the rest of the series of twelve; which are all that treat particularly of the Old Testament.

LETTER I.

That in reading the Bible we must regard it as human; as a *book of human composition and language*

It must be evident to you, my young friend, that the best way to study theology, is to study the Bible; and the best way of reading this divine book is to regard it as *human*. I use this word in its widest extent and strictest meaning.

The Bible must be read thus, because it is a book written by men for the use of men: The language is human; the means by which it has been written and preserved are human; human, in short, are the faculties by which it is to be comprehended; the helps, by which it is to be illustrated; and all the ends and uses, to which it is to be applied. You may safely believe, that the more you read the word of God in this manner, the nearer you will approach to the object of its Designer, who made man in his own image, and who, in all the works and benefits whereby he reveals himself as God, adapts himself to human conceptions.

Do not think this a common place remark. The consequences of the principle now stated, if rightly understood and carried out in their whole extent, are important. In the first place, many a superstition is shut out by it, as if the Bible, in every trifling particular of its writing materials, parchment or paper, style or pen, even to every stroke or character, which the transcribers of it have drawn, were superhuman and unearthly; as if, of course,—singularly and without parallel,—it has been exposed neither to fraud nor mistake; and is to be worshipped, not examined or tested. A bad principle indeed; which would only make those, who cherish such fond ideas of inspiration, idle and stupid; first tying a bandage over their eyes, and then asking if they see no light. Does a man, who transcribes the Bible, become immediately

an infallible divinity? You will soon see, if you will examine the transcriber. He writes now as he has always written; that is, as he happens to have accuracy, diligence, knowledge of the language and facts, leisure, patience, and a legible hand. None of all these circumstances will be altered by a miracle, because it is the Bible that he is copying. These remarks will of course be understood to apply only to those ages, that preceded the invention of printing. No parchment becomes of a firmer texture, because the scriptures are inscribed upon it; and no ink is made on that account indelible. Hebrew points and letters do not cast off their nature, because used in the book of books; and all the influences, that time exerts upon language, must still act in their full and natural course. These are not conjectures, but facts: and so are all the conclusions connected with them. Banish all remains of the leaven of that opinion, which supposes this book to be, in its condition and materials, no book, as others are; as if, for example, no various readings are to be found in it, because it is inspired. Various readings actually occur in it, and only one reading can be the right one; this is a matter of positive evidence, and not of speculation. Of course, we must examine them with care; we must distinguish and choose between different readings; and here the same knowledge and skill are requisite, that must be brought to all other human books. Indeed, the Bible stands more in need of these than any other book, because it is about the most ancient, as to the greatest part, and the first foundations of it. Through how many hands, how many nations and ages, has it been transmitted! and yet Providence, as we shall presently see, has taken care to preserve it through natural means, in a manner beyond example; and we may be fully satisfied of its authenticity, in its whole scope and contents, so far as they are of importance to us: yet we are not to infer these things *a priori*: as if the Bible were written in heaven, and not on earth; by angels and not by men. By such suppositions we do not honour, but disgrace and injure it. Great part of the most impudent objections that have been brought against it, have been taken from this air-built armoury; and many a champion fights still on the same ground, as if he were contending for the Koran of Mohammed, and some Gabriel who brought it from heaven. I cannot enlist on this side; not because the enemy is formidable, but because the field of battle is in fairy land. By a young theologian, such a hypothesis, unsupported certainly, and for the most part palpably false and visionary, would be very disgracefully assumed. It obstructs his sight, and stunts his judgment: it prevents him from inquiring,

from collecting, from examining, from illustrating on sound principles; and cramps what he may possess of those good gifts of heaven, intelligence and penetration. Many have plainly professed, I cannot read a book, which is no book like others; and some, after great labour and pains, have sunk at last into the same oppressive indolence. Luther, who had a clear and excellent genius, was embarrassed by no foolish notions of this sort; and I am well persuaded that no intelligent mind will ever consent to be so. At least I have witnessed in more than one instance, how hard it is to bring a person to right understanding and rational views in the use of the Bible, who has once in him such a pestilent quagmire of absurdity. He perpetually imagines, when he takes up the Bible, that he is holding what is not a book; and does not allow himself to see what he sees, nor to hear what he hears. Heavenly shadows are flitting before him;—forms from the realms of the *Peris* and *Neris*; and how often against all truth, utility and consistency! The worst of this is, he learns to despise or neglect, in the commencement of his studies, those external aids, the want of which will cleave to him forever afterwards; and, like other deficiencies, which seldom show all their bad consequences at first, will probably prejudice him at length against the aids of which he actually avails himself. He does not know perhaps the first principles of those helps, and so much the worse. He is contending, as he supposes, for the things of God and the scriptures, while he is in reality fighting for his own poverty against the true means and sources of knowledge,—for the cataract upon his eyes.

Do not despise, my young friend, the knowledge which is intended to prepare you for such a use of the Bible as has now been recommended. What that use is, must be left to your riper years more perfectly to understand and experience. Do not suffer yourself to be deterred by the common misuse, the often downright impious application, of what is called biblical criticism: but study languages, kindred languages; make yourself familiar with the rudiments of this delicate and philosophical and learned department:—collect whatever you are able to collect, even if it should have but a remote reference to your immediate object. Have early in your hands an interleaved copy of the Bible in its original tongues; in which you may note variations, objections, conjectures, remarks, rules for future use and judgment. But do not form decisions yet: you are at present too young: perhaps the study itself, especially of the Old Testament, is too young, to permit thoroughly matured and final decisions. Ten or twenty years hence, you and all of us will be in a very different part of the course from that in which we are now engag-

ed. We shall have thrown down many a critical scaffolding, because the wall will be completed; we shall receive many things as sure, which now seem uncertain to us; and shall not find ourselves the worse for the change. At present, be like the bees, who collect their honey from every flower; but let it be honey which you collect, not poison, not refuse. Cherish always the childlike simplicity of your veneration for the Bible, though you may sometimes see it profaned by the hands of its critics: criticism has no share in this injury except accidentally. The language-master and the interpreter are two very different beings; as we may see by so many fluent teachers of new idioms. These men may have a perfect acquaintance with the language, and yet know nothing at all of the author: to them a veil hangs before his plainest meaning;—to say nothing of his less common and obvious beauties of thought. So it is always likely to be with the mere language-master of the Bible, because it is the oldest, and the most comprehensive of books:—for this very reason however, he appears to be a useful and even indispensable thing,—purblindness excepted;—and in grammar and the minutiae of criticism even that may serve some good end.—In short, my friend, do not neglect the appurtenances and the scaffolding of theology; but remember that the appurtenances are not the thing itself, and the scaffolding is not the building. This will preserve you both from the pride of criticism, that has frozen up many a good mind; and from uncritical looseness and extravagance.

P. S. Verbal instruction is the most proper, in language, and the first elements of criticism. I do not, therefore, perplex you yet with any list of books. Richard Simon is the father of the criticism both of the Old and New Testament in modern times; but it is too soon for you, as yet, to read him. A Critical Introduction to the Old Testament, such as it ought to be, has not yet appeared.* Use Walton's Prolegomena,† and Wahner's "*Antiquitates Hebræorum*;"‡ both rich and useful books for beginners: but better still, attend to what your instructors will deliver to you on both collections of the sacred books. They will have used whatever was worth using, that is to be found in the catalogues; and the rudiments of every science are best learned by oral communication and practice.

* We have it now in Eichhorn's valuable Introduction to the Old Testament.

† Briani Waltoni Apparatus Biblicus. 1673, folio. Dathe's Edit. Leip. 1777-8.

‡ Gotting. 1743. 2 vols. 8vo.

VIRTUE, AS CONNECTED WITH CIVIL LIBERTY.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE.

VIRTUE is said to be the principle of popular governments. It may, and unquestionably does exist, in a greater or less degree, in every form and state of society; but, in a political view, there is not that demand for it in most other countries, which there is in this. It is not necessary to the action or support of a despotic government. The strong arm of absolute authority requires, on the part of the subjects, the cooperation of no higher principles, than servile fear and passive obedience. These degrading and unresisting qualities produce that abject submission of the people to the uncontrolled will of a master, in which despotism consists.

Popular governments, on the contrary, cannot flourish, or even exist long, without virtue. It is their sustenance, their life-blood. In a community, like ours, every thing depends on the tone of public morals. The reason is obvious,—*the people are the sovereign*; their will, their passions, their caprices direct the movements of the system, and determine its condition. The more the *people*, therefore, are accustomed to regulate their minds, to repress all selfish and corrupting propensities, to listen to the voice of conscience, to pay a due regard to merit in the distribution of offices, to love their country, to respect the laws, to cherish the interests of learning and religion, to delight in and labour to promote the order and welfare of the community; the more they have, in short, the dispositions and habits, which reason and our religion enjoin; the more benign and salutary the operation of our political institutions will evidently be, and the greater their stability.

The first and great requisite, then, in the citizens of a free state, is that they be virtuous. And to describe all our duties in this relation, would be to write a complete treatise of ethics. Whatever improves one's character as a *man*, renders him also a better citizen. Whatever elevates a *freeman* in the scale of moral worth, contributes to the health and vigour and preservation of his government;—a government, which, in its turn, exerts a favourable influence upon the character of the people, in proportion as it is administered agreeably to its genius and spirit. For if by a reaction of the effect upon the cause, the tendency of arbitrary power is, as all history testifies, to corrupt its subjects; the reign of law and justice, which is the perfection of civil liber-

ty, acts, on the contrary, not less in unison with the best principles of human nature,—with our moral sentiments, with reason and conscience. It is to the soul of man, its faculties and affections, what congeniality of soil and climate is to vegetable nature. In this happy disposition of things, virtue finds those genial influences, which are most propitious to its life and growth.

What can be more demonstrative of the superiority of a *free*, over an *arbitrary* government? In the latter system (if system it may be called) virtue has no place allotted to it; in the former it is the one thing needful, the great animating and sustaining principle. It would be absurd to tell the slaves of despotism, that patriotism and public spirit, or even the private and personal virtues, are necessary to the maintenance of their master's authority. He wants no such aid. The noble and generous principles of our nature are regarded by him with an eye of jealousy; they are hostile, and therefore odious, to the tyrant; his strength is the corruption and degradation of his subjects. A republic, on the contrary, from its very frame and texture, supposes the existence of virtue in the people. It is its proper and natural element. There must be some virtue, or liberty soon ceases to breathe. And the more sparingly vice is permitted to mingle its impurities, the fewer and milder will be the disorders incident to the body politic.

While a free people enjoys the *exclusive privilege*, if I may so speak, of *public* virtue; every virtue of every individual has some connexion with the good of the state. Temperance is favourable to that state of mind and body, which is necessary to the knowledge and discharge of his various duties. Industry, frugality and economy place him in circumstances to act with independence in bestowing his suffrages. Patience enables, and prudence disposes him, to bear quietly and cheerfully those public burthens, which are unavoidable under every form of government; while fortitude, courage, and patriotism qualify and impel him, to defend the laws, the rights, and the liberties of his country.

The importance of virtue in a republic will be quite as apparent, if we advert to the *source* of human actions and habits,—the dispositions and affections of the heart. A good man regulates his conduct by the laws of his Creator; he acts from a sense of duty, from a regard to reason and conscience, from a love to God and his fellow creatures. If other considerations have their influence, they hold a place entirely subordinate, and are suffered to act only as auxiliaries. Now, what may we expect, in relation to the public, from a man, who is thus governed and actuated? We may expect, in the first place, that, being superiour

to the baneful influences of envy, jealousy, avarice and ambition, he will enter into no conspiracies against the liberties of his country, or cabals to disturb its tranquillity; that he will refrain from detraction and calumny to ruin the characters of political rivals; that he will form no projects, employ no means, take advantage of no situation, to enrich or aggrandize himself or his connexions, at the expense of the public. He will not engage in public affairs with the views and feelings of a *gamester*, selfishly regarding the distinctions and emoluments of office as *stakes*, to be won by artifice and fraud. Far different will be his sentiments respecting the great interests of society; far different his practice; and if he is ever honoured with the confidence of his countrymen, it will not be, because he has *not* deserved it.

We may expect, in the next place, that he will endeavour to understand and discharge all the positive duties he owes the state. Sensible of his importance in a country, where the aggregate will of the community, not the good pleasure of an individual, directs, he will bestow a due share of his thoughts and cares on the concerns of the public. He will bow to the majesty of the laws; and will labour by his example and influence to procure for them and their depositaries that general *respect*, which may supply the place of *terroure* in absolute governments. Whatever contributes to the security and order, to the prosperity and honour of the community, will have his heart, and, as far as practicable, his hand and his purse. He will, therefore, regard with particular favour the interests of learning, religion and virtue, bestowing his suffrages on the wise and good, and cherishing those institutions, which are designed and calculated to improve the people.

We shall be the more convinced of the necessity of virtue to the preservation of civil liberty, if we consult history. What, but the prevalence of vice, can account for the destruction of all the popular governments, which have successively appeared in the world before our own? What, but that prostration of principle, that effeminacy of character, that selfish disregard of the interests of the state, which grow out of the indulgence of vicious propensities and passions,—envy and jealousy of superiour merit and talents, the love of ease and pleasure, of luxurious and expensive living, avarice, ambition, voluptuousness, and extravagance? Would the Grecian and Roman republics have lost their liberties, had they retained the simplicity and purity of manners, the integrity and vigour of character, the noble and generous devotion, to the public good, which they exhibited at some periods of their history? Was any thing wanting, but *virtue*, to have rendered the French revolution productive of a durable system of

free government? We all know that it was the excesses and crimes of the republic, which rendered it so short-lived, and occasioned the establishment of despotism.

The important truth I have been considering, shows the peculiar propriety of those *Laws*, which have for their object the protection and improvement of our morals. Such are the laws, to restrain the use of ardent spirits; to prevent gambling, vagrancy, licentiousness, and profane swearing; to enforce a due observance of the sabbath; to promote the diffusion of knowledge and piety, by encouraging schools, academies, colleges, and all institutions of learning and religion. Laws of this sort are conformable to the genius of the government; they serve as props to our political edifice; and are, therefore, eminently fit and useful. It is, indeed, this consideration, particularly, which gives our rulers their authority to interfere with the morals and religion of the people. The zeal, however, which prompts to such legislation, ought to be tempered with wisdom; for if it infringe private rights and go so far as to lose the support of public opinion, it may produce a reaction injurious to the most salutary usages and measures. By striving to obtain too much, men sometimes lose every thing.

My subject also manifests the singular folly and wickedness of unnecessarily passing laws, which have a tendency to corrupt the people;—laws, for instance, which are apt to be productive of fraud and perjury; which are vexatious and oppressive, and, therefore, being odious to large classes of citizens, are particularly liable to be violated. I say *unnecessarily*, because measures of this character are, no doubt, sometimes unavoidable,—such is the order and constitution of human affairs. There is, indeed, some temptation to violate the most common and indispensable laws. This is sufficiently evinced by the frequent occurrence of crimes. While, therefore, it is the duty of rulers to refrain, as far as possible, from such measures, as involve extraordinary temptations; it is the duty of the people, when such measures do take place, to regard them as special trials of their virtue, and as parts of those circumstances, which a wise Providence has ordered for their moral discipline and improvement.

From this source our moral and religious societies derive one of their strongest recommendations to public patronage. The Society for the Suppression of Intemperance,—the Evangelical Missionary Society,—Bible Societies,—all are valuable in this view. By promoting the improvement of individuals and classes of men, such institutions contribute to the preservation of our social system,—our fair fabric of liberty, law, morality and religion,—that inestimable order of things, *which leaves us to enjoy*

all that man is capable of enjoying, and which invites us to be all that man is capable of being.

Nothing can place in a clearer light the importance of attending to the qualifications of candidates for office. If virtue is required in every citizen, it can by no means be dispensed with in those, whose examples and opinions derive weight from their elevation in society. It is yet very common for men, either to lose sight of their consciences at elections, or to imagine that persons, who are very exceptionable in their principles and characters, may nevertheless be very good agents for the public. This absurd notion is probably suggested by the responsibility which is attached to office. Rulers, it is thought, will conduct right, because, if they do not, they will *at least* lose their places. Experience cannot, surely, have been duly attended to by those, whom such reasoning satisfies; otherwise the frequent abuses of trust, which happen, must have convinced them of its fallacy. Besides, responsibility has its limits; it influences only to a certain extent, and within a certain sphere; it does not reach to the *secret* practices of rulers, nor does it take cognisance of *much* that is *omitted* to be done,—of the neglect of opportunities for doing good, which keen-eyed zeal for the public service discovers and improves. Advantageous as the tribunal of public opinion certainly is, it is far from being a complete security for the faithful exercise of delegated power. Look well, then, to the characters of those, whom you clothe with authority. Consider the magnitude of the concerns intrusted to them; consider, above all things, that they are the guardians of the public morals.

Has Divine Providence seen fit to place us in circumstances, which present inducements and a field for the practice of virtue, which, perhaps, no other nation on earth possesses? Are the consequences of our principles, habits, and actions, be they good or bad, of greater importance, than they would be under a different form of government? Is our situation, at the same time, singularly favourable to the development and exercise of our intellectual and moral powers? Have we an opportunity to act as rational and accountable beings,—to be literally and truly *men*? Is it true, also, that not only our present comfort and enjoyment, but our most valuable interests,—interests, which respect the whole of our existence,—the simplicity and purity of our divine religion, and those qualities of heart and mind and life which constitute worth of character, depend in no small degree on the continuance and healthy condition of our political organization? And is not our *responsibility* proportionably great? *To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.* Much is given to us,—more, than was ever bestowed on any other peo-

ple. Every thing in our situation invites the culture, every thing favours the growth, of moral excellence. We are exalted to heaven in point of civil and religious privileges. We can, under God, preserve them by our virtues. We shall lose them only by our vices. Woe to us, then, if we *do* lose them!

LAICUS.

THE CHARACTER OF ZOLLIKOFER.

WE present our readers in the following article, with a character of Zollikofer, well known as a popular preacher during his life, and whose printed discourses have been very highly esteemed. He was born at St. Gall, in Switzerland, on the 5th of August, 1730. He was educated at the university of Utrecht, where the professors of divinity were in high repute, but used a poor system of instruction; so that Zollikofer used to say, 'The little that I know, I was obliged to teach myself,—chiefly after I came to years of maturity; for I had but a miserable education.' He however became extensively known, and was greatly admired and respected. He died on the 22d of January, 1788, in the 58th year of his age.—Many of his sermons have appeared in an English dress, and even amidst the imperfections of an ordinary translation have received the approbation of many of the best judges. Their great peculiarities of manner will be found from the following sketch to be strongly marked by the characteristics of the man.

"It is not my intention to meddle with the biography of Zollikofer, as being too imperfectly known to me, and as the worthy editor of his posthumous writings, appointed by himself, is far better qualified for the task. I shall confine myself solely to what I have been able to gather from my personal intercourse with him, and from the diligent perusal of his writings, concerning the peculiarities of his genius and of his character.

All the qualities of this man partook somewhat of privacy and retirement, but were therefore the more substantial. In his exterior no one in particular of his good qualities was discernible to any extraordinary degree: but only the result of all,—sedateness and composure. He felt deeply, and had a cold appearance. He thought much, and was taciturn. He was extremely benevolent, and not obtrusive in his kindness. The superficial observer saw nothing in him except a certain decorum, which

inspired respect, but announced no great internal activity. On a closer inspection his mind was seen to be ever at work, and his heart constantly agitated by lively emotions and even by passions.

Nobody that I was ever yet acquainted with, has had that consistency of character which Cicero before all things requires of a virtuous man, in so eminent a degree as Zollikofer. With what is called humour or caprice he was totally unacquainted. Neither his countenance nor his demeanour shewed any alteration one day more than another. He was not at one visit conversible and attentive, at another absent and pensive. He was not found at one time disposed to effusions of the heart, at another time to reserve. At all times he was the same, always in the middle way, always under the government of reason, always in a certain equipoise of his affections.

This was owing in a great measure to his being free from the ambition of shining on the spot by any of his good qualities. He seemed never to make it the subject of his thoughts how he might appear to others: he was only intent on what he was determined to be. When he had nothing more to say, he thought it no disgrace to be silent. He never held it his duty to be lavish in complaisance on every occasion: but if in the course of the conversation, any true sentiment occurred which at the same time might prove agreeable, he uttered it with propriety and evident complacency.

It has never been my fortune to take notice of a person who had arrived at equal perfection with Zollikofer in his thoughts and in his labours. There was in him an argumentative mind, a talent of nice discernment in matters relating to human actions and failings; a sound and vigorous judgment; the faculty of unfolding his thoughts with perspicuity; the talent of a really exquisite taste in literary composition. But these several capacities were not completely expanded by the education he received. His studies and his models were not the most perfect. The first sermons that I heard him deliver, composed in his early years, still retained some borrowed ideas, not of his own original conception,—a verbose manner of expression. They always differed from the general run of pulpit discourses; but they did not fix the attention,—did not yield information in the degree that Zollikofer was capable of fixing the attention and of giving information. But his sermons improved upon me from year to year both in matter and in delivery, in genius and in diction. Since the time of my first intimacy with him, when I consequently began to observe him more closely, how much more abundant has his moral instruction become, how much purer and more com-

pressed his style.—This cultivation of his genius he never ceased to continue till the last day of his life.

In his moral character the progress was less discernible, because in fact he was, even early in life, near to that perfection which his nature was able to reach, and because in general a man's character and the little alterations in it are not so striking to others, as the endowments of his mind. Nevertheless those who had for a series of years been attentive to Zollikofer, must have found I believe, that his gravity was more and more mingled with tenderness, his stern principles with gentle emotions: that though he retained all the original solidity of his character, he however became gradually more affable, pleasant and alert.

It is not the business of a public teacher to investigate truths from their primitive elements, but to deliver, to illustrate and to carry home to the heart of his hearers, those which are acknowledged by all reasonable persons, or must be immediately acknowledged whenever the meaning of them is once comprehended,—and which at the same time are of practical utility. Zollikofer studiously avoided in his sermons all inquiries that were too abstruse for vulgar apprehension, or for the generality of hearers. He did not trouble his audience with doubts, a practice which never fails to unsettle the conviction of the unlearned, even if they are not thoroughly understood, whereas the mischief can only be repaired by the solution when it is perfectly comprehended.

Few preachers before him ever ventured to introduce into the pulpit such specific relations, duties, faults, usages, pleasures of domestic and social life: still fewer have had the art of handling them at the same time with such dignity, with such fertility in important instruction, with so natural a reference to religion, as Zollikofer. His morality is not, as has so often been said of the precepts of persons of his class, proper for the pulpit, but impracticable in the world, and useless in the commerce of life. He distinguished the good that is to be wished, from the good that is to be expected in the present constitution of the world and amid the actual circumstances of society; and furnishes directions how the latter is to be attained, and the former approached.

He happened to live at a time, when some tenets of dogmatical theology, which formerly had been tenaciously adhered to, at least among such as were appointed to teach them, were beginning to be doubtful even to them. It was reserved for our days to see the clergy themselves take the torch of reason in their hands, for throwing a light on the particular objects of their study. Even Zollikofer never set about any inquiries till after he had entered on his office. His youth was passed among exam-

ples of a devotion nearly bordering on fanaticism, in which all reflection was laid aside. During his college studies and his preparatory exercises, his efforts were employed solely in endeavouring to comprehend and to fix in his memory, what was taught him. Not till arrived at the age of manhood, when the influence of authority was diminished with him, and his own understanding had attained to maturity; when the duty of a teacher summoned him to investigate truths for himself,—did he gradually break loose from the shackles of a system, and with an unbiassed mind press forward into the sanctuary of religion.

Accordingly, now, that the spirit of examination and philosophical research is spreading far and wide, now is the most arduous time for a preacher. The collisions of duties are more distressing to him, and happen more frequently than ever. The volatile are carried too far by the spirit of innovation. Anxious and foreboding minds would stop the progress of truth. The concealment of particular opinions under ambiguous expressions, is revolting to the honest and ingenuous; and the plain and frank declaration of them, especially if not yet brought to complete decisive inward certainty, fills the humane and discreet with consternation.

I think I am warranted in proposing Zollikofer, who doubtless was sensible to these difficulties, as a pattern of the method in which they are to be surmounted. He was at all times heard to declare boldly and honestly, whatever he clearly and firmly acknowledged as true. In proportion as the light in his perceptions increased, as the certainty of his convictions augmented, his courage grew greater in departing from tenets hitherto believed. But in points, where he still doubted, where he did not see thoroughly clear, he takes the vulgar proposition, giving it the most rational interpretation and the most practically useful application. He was neither hastily carried away by every new and specious idea, nor did he adhere to his early private opinions in spite of luminous reasons against them. Habitually slow and deliberate in undertaking, but vigorous, resolute and persevering in execution: such was his practice likewise in the investigation of religious tenets. He examined leisurely in silence and retirement, and carefully abstained in the mean time from touching on the still doubtful points. But what he discovered after such a trial, no authority could induce him to surrender, and no dread of the judgment of mankind could deter him from avowing.

Zollikofer possessed a peculiar elevation of mind, a high sense of liberty and independence, which is not always the concomitant of great endowments, or of profound learn-

ing. The latter often subdues instead of raising the mind, by consuming too much the bodily strength, and leaving the man too little leisure to enjoy the pleasing sensations that courage inspires. The condition of many of the learned contributes to render them timid, bashful and dependent on others. Zollikofer's natural disposition to a generous and liberal conduct was not suppressed by the niggardliness of fortune. Though not born in shining circumstances, yet he never was in want, and came early into a situation, which, with his moderate desires and his prudence in the management of his income, might be deemed affluent.

His beneficence, like the rest of his virtues, was active and concealed. The multitude of young persons, who had recourse to him in their necessities, was not less than the number of those who applied to him for advice. And neither the one nor the other departed unsatisfied from him, as far as his means or his sagacity sufficed to relieve their wants.

As nothing in general betrays more littleness of mind than avarice, so liberality is ever associated with magnanimity. Zollikofer embraced with alacrity every occasion of exercising this virtue; wherever propriety or charity called for expense, wherever relief was to be administered to the sick and the infirm, wherever useful arts and sciences were to be promoted and encouraged, he was ready with his offering.

In mentioning his greatness of mind, one feature of it must not be forgotten, which is, that he never strove to recommend himself to the notice of any man, otherwise than by what that man himself might perceive and remark in him. He required no other respect, than that which naturally accrued to him from his personal qualities. Concerning all testimonies and tokens of his worth,—of his fame which actually was spread throughout all Germany, of the veneration in which he was held by several great personages, of his extensive literary correspondence, which in general engaged him in the confidence of numbers of persons hoping to obtain from him advice, support or information,—of the approbation bestowed on his writings, he never gave the most distant intimation to a stranger, or even to an acquaintance, in order to draw from him a greater veneration. What he was, he left all who conversed with him to judge of themselves, from what they heard him say or saw him do, not from what others thought of him.

In his domestic connexions, where others for the most part betray coldness and neglect, reserving their efforts to please for the entertainment of strangers, Zollikofer was uniformly tender and assiduous in rendering himself agreeable. He was twice

married. Each time he preferred the company of his wife to the generality of societies, and made it his principal recreation. How great he thought his loss in losing his former, was evinced by the disposition to melancholy, the insensibility towards whatever had before amused him, which her death brought upon him. And how happy he was in his second, the extraordinary flow of spirits and good humour, which every one remarked in him during his last matrimonial connexion was a manifest proof. He was therefore by no means of a solitary and unsocial disposition. It even seemed as though he absolutely could not endure the loneliness of an unmarried state. He had however no less aversion to large companies, as being incapable of playing a part in them to his own satisfaction. His wife and one or two friends, were sufficient to his entertainment, whether he were desirous of nothing more than to unbend his mind, or sought for the enjoyment of social satisfaction in their converse. He did not however avoid company: and in any society that he happened to fall into, or was taken by his friends or relations, or led by official or other accidental connexions, he was easy and even cheerful, which is rarely the case with persons of his talents. He was always seen to be in his proper place in every company, even where the ordinary tone was extremely different from his, since he uniformly appeared in it with dignity, and carried thither reason and judgment, by means whereof he either kept those that were present within bounds, or was able with strict propriety to take part in their mirth.

The delineation of the man 'that offends not in word,' after the expression of the apostle James, is one of his finest compositions, and a real picture of its author. Few persons are so attentive as he was, to say nothing untrue. For that reason he was less loquacious than others, as it was impossible for him to say what he did not think, or to speak on what he had not previously considered. He knew that it was not in the power of man, to observe the most perfect sincerity, or by the communication of his sentiments to be useful to others, if he were as prompt with his judgment, his advice, his praise, as another in communicating to him his opinion, making known to him his circumstances, or reading to him his work. He therefore had the appearance of being reserved, distant, sometimes not obsequious enough, and cold. But this was because his mind was still intensely occupied with the sentiments or the concerns of the other, and he would not open himself to him, till he had fully determined within, what he held to be true, or what was the best method to be adopted on the occasion.

From such a man it is to be expected, that he should be constant in his inclinations, and particularly in his friendships. In fact he never alienated himself from any of the persons with whom he had once, after trial and from selection, entered into connexion. He bore with him to the grave the love and veneration of all who had once devoted these sentiments to him. Whatever is true and real, is in its nature constant: and even the versatility of others is fixed by a firm and always consistent man.

Were I to judge of the peculiarity of his talents; I should say, that his prominent abilities consisted not in profound philosophical penetration, not in poetical flights of fancy, but in plain and sound sense, an acute observation and the art of disquisition. Perspicuous thoughts were always the groundplot with him. Thence arose first sentiment; by this sometimes the fire of imagination was kindled. Had he been employed in compositions, where sentiment alone was intended to prevail, or where he was not sufficiently prepared by meditation, he might not have been so happy as in those calculated merely for instruction. His addresses to the Deity are not inferior to his sermons. In his exercises of devotion, his finest pieces are those which are drawn up in the form of meditations.

He laid no claim to an extensive erudition, although he was deeply versed in more than one department of literature, and was daily increasing his fund of knowledge. Like most men of sentiment and reflection, he was continually learning, and took pleasure in his studies, though he imagined he knew but little. The truth is, that, as his hours of labour were all taken up with his own thoughts, and with the actual, living world, which he ever made it his object to inform and to improve: the thoughts of others, and the perusal of books were reserved only for his hours of recreation;—from which he therefore obtained rather food and sustenance for his mind, than an accumulated store of learning.

His judgment in all matters that are amenable to the bar of reason, was extremely correct: and by it his taste was governed in objects of sentiment. On the value of literary, particularly philosophical productions, he pronounced as a competent judge: and had a nice discernment in the truly good style in every class, as he was a complete master of it in his own. He loved poetry and was sensible to its charms; neither was he indifferent to works of art. And though his complacency in the latter did not rise to extacy, nor his skill to that of a connoisseur: yet he might pass his judgment on them even among both connoisseurs and amateurs, without fear of scorn. His style, like his person, had a certain solemnity, which at first sight was not entirely free from

stiffness and formality. His delivery was accompanied by that grave deportment which commanded respect, and attended him in all the actions of his life. And this endowment of a suitable declamation is not one of the least merits in the functions of the office which he filled. It was not his action, it was not the language of his looks by which his pulpit eloquence was heightened. The motions of his body and of his hands were too uniform, the modulations of his voice not sufficiently varied: but his enunciation was so clear and distinct, and particularly the emphasis which he laid on every word was so adapted to the impression which the concomitant idea was designed to make, and so suited to the proper illustration of the sense, that the best judges were sensibly affected by the charms of an eloquent discourse, and those of the lower orders completely enabled to understand what they heard.

Zollikofer was neither vehement nor incessant in his application: but his whole heart and mind and his undivided attention were fixt on what he was about. Hence it was, that although, besides what the duties of his function required, he was obliged to devote much of his time to such as came to consult his advice or to ask relief, and even to visitors from curiosity or ceremony,—considerable portions likewise to the care of his health and to repose: yet the number of his literary performances is not small. He was free from one fault which authors and scholars are apt to fall into; that of putting off what they have to do, till they are compelled by necessity to set about it, or the moment is come when it is wanted. He sat down to work whenever he felt inclination and ability for it, was never in haste and never dilatory. And in this manner his best works were composed. Every delay is always an effect either of want of resolution or of indolence of mind. The contrary procedure of Zollikofer is therefore a sign of his self-command, and of the little vicissitude in his mental powers.

Zollikofer from his very infancy suffered from weak nerves and from a consumptive habit; two complaints, one rendering life exceedingly troublesome, and the other attacking it immediately. The former is apt to render a man ill-humoured and morose, by so frequently disturbing him in his occupations, and the other to fill him with anxiety from the danger with which it daily threatens him. Zollikofer was not thus affected by either: or if he felt irritations of this sort, he got the better of them before they were apparent to the bystanders. He was obliged to give up more of his time to recreation, than one of his active turn of mind could have wished: but he never complained of it. His pulpit exertions were often painful to him: but as long as

he thought he could go through them, he bore the uneasiness, without speaking much of it. And if he let any thing escape him concerning it, it was only when he thought it necessary for procuring himself a little relief. The profound silence which, as I have just remarked, he observed concerning such diseases as attacked his spirits, disables me from judging how painful they were, with which he had to contend. But by what I can infer from some accounts, his equal serenity was not always the consequence of a condition totally void of trouble, but of his persevering patience.

I proceed now to his piety, the virtue which cements the rest together, by deriving every kind of good and all our duties from one common source. It was the pure consequence of his convictions, as these proceeded from his own reflections.

Zollikofer's devotion consisted chiefly in the contemplation of those truths which concern God and our relations to him, and his piety in the assiduous discharge of his duties.—As he never made a show of those virtues, which are properly calculated to be known to others, since they nowhere find their objects but in society and make its utility their aim: so it is to be expected, that he withdrew, even from the sight of his friends, for those exercises of devotion which relate only to him who performs them, and require not the participation of others during the act. Nevertheless from some emotions with which I have occasionally seen him affected by the thoughts of God, while contemplating his works and the ways of his providence, I am somewhat enabled to judge, how greatly his soul must have been affected, when he resigned himself entirely to these impressions. Accordingly, I should suppose, that in this particular also, his feelings were stronger and more ardent than the expressions of them: and in like manner as under a certain appearance of coldness and indifference he was a tender husband and a warm friend; so in fact his devotion was frequently fervent, when he seemed only engaged in calm meditation. Perhaps with persons, who like Zollikofer express their ideas so well, and their feelings so imperfectly, the reason may be, that the former are clearly evolved and distinct, the latter extremely concentrated, as it were indivisible, and therefore the more intrinsic.

The last scene of his life was, if I may so express myself, of a piece with the whole: he was when dying what he had always been through life. Those who attended or were about him in these awful moments, are better qualified to inform the public of the particular circumstances of his departure, than I can be. I only know from the accounts that have been communicated to me, that, judging from several of his actions, he certainly expect-

ed his dissolution, while he carefully avoided every thing that could excite in his family the apprehension of losing him; that in his last days he preferred entire solitude even to the presence of his wife and friends, though at the same time he gave them the most convincing proofs that he still loved them as tenderly as ever, and that he retired from them only in order that they might suffer the less, and that he might reserve his strength entire for the conflict he had himself to sustain.

To begin preparation for death when he is already at the door, is a foolish attempt, which could never enter the thoughts of such a person as Zollikofer, and which he had no occasion to make. But for bearing more easily the struggles with which the dissolution of the body is inevitably attended, for keeping present to the mind the long fostered principles of religion, and the well known grounds of consolation and satisfaction it affords, when assailed by the most harassing sensations from without: no method is more effectual, at least in my estimation,—which is here in perfect unison with the behaviour of my friend,—than retreat, not only from noise, but likewise from whatever may excite any lively emotion. The soul should now be entirely shut up within herself, entirely occupied with her own concerns, and waste as little of her strength as possible, on external objects, overburdened already by the dying body. I am well aware, that a great difference is here occasioned by circumstances, constitution, the structure of the nerves, the nature of the disease, and that one good man cannot die exactly like another good man, any more than all can exhibit their virtue in precisely the same manner during life. But, whether from the uniformity in our characters, whether I am better able to transport myself into Zollikofer's situation, because I knew him so thoroughly and loved him so cordially; I am sure that I can perfectly figure to myself why he was desirous of being entirely alone when sick and dying, sincerely as he might have wished to share his life with certain persons; and I approve his conduct, that even in these moments he acted as he thought was for the best.

In this resolute prosecution of his best perceptions, and with that composure and serenity of mind, which is ever the effect of it, he resigned his spirit, without a murmur at the languishing and painful state, in which he was, in sure and certain hope of that which awaited him, in calm reliance upon God from the conviction of his goodness. Thus in a few rapid strokes was his death sketched out to me by a friend. I have chiefly confined myself to his life, of which I also was a witness; and in the remembrance of the sound understanding, the public spirit and the self-command that reigned therein throughout, I shall

always find a faithful monitor at hand, to guard me against surprise, to resist tumultuous passion, or rouse my drooping spirit to fortitude both in action and forbearance, and lead me to meet difficulty or danger without dismay.

MISCELLANEOUS COLLECTIONS.

DR. FULLER.

DR. THOMAS FULLER was one of the most celebrated of the English divines, who lived in the troublesome days of the commonwealth, and the civil wars that preceded it. He was remarkable for his loyalty and private worth; for great powers of mind; and for a playful wit, which he could not help introducing into his most serious writings. He composed a variety of works, which are now very little known, though they abound with sensible and useful thoughts. His quaint style was in part the fault of his age,—is certainly a fault—and yet no one would probably be willing to dispense with any of its peculiarities. We intend offering to our readers occasionally some extracts from his “Prophane and holy State;” a book, which has become very rare; since no edition of it has been printed since the year 1657. We will begin with his picture of

THE FAITHFUL MINISTER.

“He endeavours to get the generall love and good will of his parish. This he doth, not so much to make a benefit of them, as a benefit for them; that his ministry may be more effectual; otherwise, he may preach his own heart out, before he preacheth any thing into theirs. The good conceit of a physician is half a cure; and his practice will scarce be happy, where his person is hated. Yet he humours them not in his doctrine to get their love; for such a spaniel is worse than a dumbe dog. He shall sooner get their good will by walking uprightly, than by crouching and creeping. If pious living and painfull labouring in his calling will not win their affections, he counts it gain to lose them. As for those which causelessly hate him, he pities and prayes for them; and such there will be. I should suspect his preaching had no salt in it, if no galled horse did wince.

He is strict in ordering his conversation. It was said of one, who preached very well and lived very ill. 'That when he was out of the pulpit, it was pity he should ever go into it; and when he was in the pulpit, it was pity he should ever come out of it.' But our minister lives sermons. And yet I deny not but dissolute men, like unskillfull horsemen, which open a gate on the wrong side, may by the virtue of their office open heaven for others, and shut themselves out.

His behaviour towards his people is grave and courteous. Not too austere and retired; especially he detesteth affected gravity, (which is rather on men than in them,) whereby some belie their register books, antedate their age to seem far older than they are, and plait and set their brows in an affected sadness. Whereas St. Anthony the monk might have been known among hundreds of his order by his cheerful face; he having ever (though a most mortified man) a merry countenance.

He will not offer to God of that which costs him nothing; but takes pains beforehand for his sermons. Demosthenes never made any oration on the sudden; and he was wont to say, That he showed how he honoured and revered the people of Athens, because he was careful what he spake unto them. Indeed, if our minister be surprised with a sudden occasion, he counts himself rather to be excused than commended, if premeditating only the bones of his sermons, he clothes it with flesh extempore. As for those, whose long custom hath made preaching their nature, that they can discourse sermons without study, he accounts their examples rather to be admired than imitated.

Having brought his sermon into his head, he labours to bring it into his heart, before he preaches it to his people. Some have questioned ventriloquie, when men strangely speak out of their bellies, whether it can be done lawfully or no: might I coin the word cordiloquie, when men draw the doctrines out of their hearts, sure all would count this lawful and commendable.

He chiefly reproves the reigning sins of the time and place he lives in. We may observe that our Saviour never inveighed against idolatry, usury, Sabbath breaking, among the Jews; not that these were not sins, but that they were not practised so much in that age, wherein wickednesse was spun with a finer thred; and therefore Christ principally bent the drift of his preaching against spirituall pride, hypocrisie, and traditions, then predominant amongst the people. Also our minister confuteth no old heresies, which time hath confuted; nor troubles his auditory with such strange hideous cases of conscience, that it is more hard to find the case than the resolution.

He doth not onely move the bread of life, and toss it up and down in generalities, but also breaks it into particular directions. Drawing it down to cases of conscience; that a man may be warranted in his particular actions, whether they be lawfull or not.

His similes and illustrations are always familiar, never contemptible. Indeed reasons are the pillars of the fabrick of a sermon, but similitudes are the windows which give the best lights. He avoids such stories, whose mention may suggest bad thoughts to the auditours; and will not use a light comparison to make thereof a grave application, for fear lest his poyson go further than his antidote.

He provideth not only wholesome, but plentiful food for his people. Almost incredible was the painfulnesse of Baronius, the compiler of the voluminous annals of the church, who, for thirty years together, preached three or four times a week to the people. As for our minister, he preferreth rather to entertain his people with wholesome cold meat, which was on the table before, than with that, which is hot from the spit, raw and half roasted. Yet, in repetition of the same sermon, every edition hath a new addition, if not of new matter, of new affections. 'Of whom (saith St. Paul) we have told you often, and now we tell you weeping.'

He makes not that wearisome, which should ever be welcome. Wherefore his sermons are of an ordinary length, except on extraordinary occasions. What a gift had John Halseback, professor at Vienna, in tediousnesse! who, being to expound the prophet Esay to his auditours, read twenty-one years on the first chapter, and yet finished it not.

He counts the success of his ministry the greatest preferment. Yet herein hath God humbled many painful pastours, in making them to be clouds to rain, not over Arabia the happy, but over the stonie or desert: so that they may complain with the herdsman in the poet:

'Heu mihi, quam pingui macer est mihi taurus in arvo!'

Yet such pastours may comfort themselves, that great is their reward with God in heaven, who measures it not by their succeſse, but endeavours. Besides, though they see not, their people may feel benefit by their ministry. Yea, the preaching of the word in some places is like the planting of woods, where, though no profit is received for twenty years together, it comes afterwards. And grant that God honours thee not to build his

temple in thy parish, yet thou maist with David provide metall and materialls for Solomon thy successour to build it with.

He is moderate in his tenets and opinions. Not that he gilds over lukewarmnesse in matters of moment, with the title of discretion; but withall he is carefull not to entitle violence in indifferent and inconcerning matters to be zeal. Indeed men of extraordinary tallness (though otherwise little deserving) are made porters to lords: and those of unusuall littlenesse are made ladies' dwarfs; whilst men of moderate stature may want masters. Thus, many notorious for extremities may find favourers to prefer them, whilst moderate men in the middle truth may want any to advance them.

Lying on his death-bed he bequeathes to each of his parishioners his precepts and example for a legacie; and they, in requital, erect every one a monument for him, in their hearts. As for outward estate, he commonly lives in too bare pasture to die fat. It is well if he hath gathered any flesh, being more in blessing than in bulk."

We will set by the side of this the character of

THE GOOD PARISHIONER.

"THOUGH neare to the church, he is not far from God. Like unto Justus, Acts xviii. 8. 'One that worshippeth God, and his house joynd hard to the synagogue.' Otherwise, if his distance from the church be great, his diligence is the greater to come thither in season. He is timely at the beginning of prayer. Yet as Tullie charged some dissolute people for being such sluggards, that they never saw the sun rising or setting, as being always up after the one, and abed before the other: so some negligent people never hear prayers begun, or sermon ended; the confession being past before they come, and the blessing not come before they are passed away.

In sermon, he sets himself to heare God in the minister. Therefore divesteth he himself of all prejudice; the jaundice in the eyes of the soul presenting colours false unto it. He hearkens very attentively. 'Tis a shame when the church itself is cœmeterium, wherein the living sleep above the ground, as the dead do beneath.

At every point that concerns himself he turns down a leaf in his heart; and rejoiceth that God's word hath pierced him, as hoping that whilst his soul smarts, it heals. And, as it is no manners for him that hath good venison before him, to ask whence it came, but rather fairly to fall to it; so hearing an excellent sermon, he never enquires whence the preacher had it, but falls aboard to practise it.

He accuseth not his minister of spight in particularising him. It does not follow, that the archer aimed because the arrow hit. Rather, our parishioner reasoneth thus : If my sin be notorious, how could the minister misse it ? If secret, how could he hit it without God's direction ? But foolish hearers make even the bells of Aaron's garments "*to clink as they think.*" And a guilty conscience is like a whirlpool, drawing in all to itself, which otherwise would passe by. One, causelessly disaffected to his minister, complained that he in his last sermon had personally inveighed against him ; and accused him thereof to a grave religious gentleman in the parish. 'Truly (said the gentleman) I had thought in his sermon he had meant me ; for it touched my heart.' This rebated the edge of the other's anger.

He is bountiful in contributing to the repair of God's house. For though he be not of their opinion, who would have the churches under the gospell conformed to the magnificence of Solomon's temple ; and adorn them so gaudily that devotion is more distracted then raised, and men's souls rather dazzled then lightened ; yet he conceives it fitting, that such sacred places should be decently and properly maintained.

He is respectfull to his minister's widow and posterity, for his sake. My prayer shall be, that ministers' widows and children may never stand in need of such relief ; and may never want such relief, when they stand in need of it."

REVIEW.

ARTICLE IX.

A Statement of the Proceedings in the First Church at Dedham, respecting the settlement of a Minister in 1818, with some considerations on Congregational Church polity. By a Member of the said Church and Parish, at the request of a multitude within and without. Cambridge : printed by Cummings and Hilliard.

A Discourse delivered before the Convention of Congregational Ministers of Massachusetts, at their Annual Meeting in Boston, June 1, 1820. By AARON BANCROFT, D. D. Pastor of the second Congregational Church in Worcester. Boston : printed by Wells and Lilly. 1820.

IT is difficult to say, which is the most remarkable, the sudden stop which was put to the progress of reformation in the middle
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of the seventeenth century, the period of the emigration of our ancestors, or the rapid change which has taken place in this respect within the last few years. That the bold and fearless spirit, which distinguished Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the early reformers, should have been so soon subdued, can only be accounted for by political causes, or by the operation of human passions, such as we shall endeavour to explain.

The arm of civil authority in Great Britain, supported and encouraged as it was by the joy of the whole nation, at being relieved from the hypocritical and heartless tyranny and nonsense of the Roundheads and Levellers, was too strong for the few serious and enlightened friends of rational religious freedom, and the thinking part of the Dissenters have since that period been sufficiently thankful in being freed from actual persecution, and in being gradually restored to a very limited portion of their civil rights.

It is not wonderful, therefore, that in England, the hierarchy, with all its strange and unscriptural doctrines and forms, half popish, and half protestant, should have continued to this day to check the progress of free inquiry, and to prevent the adoption of the pure and simple forms of worship and doctrine of the primitive church. Such has been the case, and such most assuredly is the cause of it.—We might indeed add, that ambition having been satisfied by throwing off the Romish yoke, it was exceedingly convenient for the support of the throne and of the aristocracy, to retain the patronage derived from the power of making so many ecclesiastical lords, and of giving away one tenth part of all the revenues of the land.

It is a little more difficult to account for the intolerant spirit of our persecuted ancestors, a spirit which prevailed in our country from its first settlement till within the last half century, and whose speedy extinction may be hoped for and argued from the convulsive paroxysms under which it is at present suffering.

The prevalence of this odious and unchristian spirit, may be in part attributed simply to the *love of power*, a love, the most cherished, and the most universal. This was encouraged by the existence of a single, overpowering sect; and we may ascribe our gradual liberation from ecclesiastical domination, and our restoration to the rights of conscience, in no inconsiderable degree, to the fantastic multiplication of different opinions and persuasions, (some indeed not entitled to much respect, except for the sincerity of those who hold them,) which now renders combination to oppress and tyrannize, difficult, if not impossible.

Had there been but one sect in our country, it is probable that it would always have had it in its power, as in the early period

of our history, to avail itself of the arm of flesh, and the sword of the civil magistrate, to teach what the doctrines of scripture are, and to suppress all opinions contrary to the lawful human creed. Dissenters from the *established* faith, (no matter *how* established) have in all ages been deemed "heretics,"—it being as true in religious disputes, that those who fail of procuring a majority to their sentiments are heretics, as that those, in civil contentions, who are not successful, are deemed rebels. Names, in all such cases, change with power.

This is the great secret of the authority ascribed to the practice and opinions of the church. Out of the 1800 years since our Saviour's death, and that of his apostles and disciples, there has only been a short period of fifty years, and that in America alone, in which opinion has been *truly* free; and even here, it is not free now, except in a small spot in Massachusetts; for though we have no longer the prison and the faggot, we have the averted eye, the affected sneer, the refusal of courtesy, to those who dare to interpret the scriptures for themselves.

These things may explain in some degree, the paradox, that error should so long have usurped the place of Divine revelation.

But it was not probably a *love of power alone*, which excited and inflamed the persecuting and narrow spirit of the early divines and brethren of the New England churches. Though persecuted themselves, they had not imbibed the truly catholic spirit of the gospel. Ages are necessary to effect any important changes in the characters of nations, or in opinions. Many of their early prejudices were too deeply rooted, to be suddenly, or by a hasty effort, torn up. They required something like the process of subduing our forests; the trees must be first girdled, then cut down and burnt; but the cultivator must wait patiently, till the roots and stumps are rotten, before he can hope to have a smooth and even field, yielding readily to the plough, and offering no obstacles to his industry and skill. Our ancestors, though they deemed it horrible to have 2000 pious ministers, of their own opinions, ejected in one day for nonconformity, and though they shuddered at the picture in their primers, of the pious Rogers, with his nine children, at the stake; yet would have deemed it a pious work to burn an organ, or a cassock, or a quaker who should return after expulsion, because their dread of episcopal power, with all its abominations of tythes, and simony, and plurality of benefices, and the consequent and indeed shameful poverty of the inferior clergy, were still fresh and festering in their minds; and as to the quakers, they were afraid that their own infallibility should be called in question; for it was, till within

the last half century, an axiom, with all Christian churches, that, (though others were not,) they, the elect and favoured of God, were, if not infallible, yet certainly never in the wrong.

These are some among the many causes of the stop put to a reformation, as glorious in its beginning, as it has been halt and lame in its progress.

But whatever may have been the causes, whether we are or are not correct in stating them, it is not now to be denied against the authority of our ecclesiastical records, and the testimony of Hubbard and the superstitious Mather, that our theological rulers were scarcely less intolerant than Laud and his associates. They were less cruel, but they were as stiff, as dictatorial, and thought themselves as infallible.

This spirit began to grow more feeble in the second century of our history, and we probably owe this in part to the violence and fanaticism of Whitfield and his followers. These men went so far beyond the sober fanaticism of our regular clergy, that they compelled them to think and read, in order to refute them. Hence the church saw Chauncy, Mayhew, Cooper, and many others, venturing into a new and untrodden field, and the liberality and intelligence of the inhabitants of Boston supported their learned and pious pastors in the truly scriptural work. Still the rules for the government of the churches continued to be, though loose and fluctuating, according to the character of the pastor, his learning and liberality, in the main intolerant.

Creeds of human invention were established as tests of Christian fellowship, and as conditions of admission, both to the sacred office of pastor, and to the humbler but more important rights of baptism and communion; and many thousands, we speak with conviction, have been kept out of the pale of the church by measures perfectly arbitrary and unscriptural.

But a new day is dawning upon us. The doors of the sanctuary are no longer shut by creeds, adopted in the dark ages of the church, which not even the adepts can explain. It is hoped that all who believe in Jesus Christ, will hereafter be admitted on the same liberal terms on which our Saviour admitted his disciples, and on which the apostles introduced the converted heathen into the church. It is indeed to be lamented, that people living in a christian country, baptized into its faith, and attending its worship, should be excluded from the rights of christian fellowship, and debarred from the power of voting in religious concerns, because they are not acceptable to the few, who have signed articles which they did not comprehend, and which form no portion of the requisitions for admission in the sacred scriptures.

It would seem strange, that, in an age in which such surprising advances have been made in the exact sciences, in physic, in the philosophy of the human mind, in political economy, in the science of government, and with regard to the civil rights of mankind, no new light should have been thrown on the doctrines of theology, no reformation have taken place in our creeds, or in the forms of worship, and the order and discipline of the church. It cannot be pretended they were perfect before, because it is notorious they were corrupt, and odiously corrupt, before the reformation; and it cannot be even imagined by any rational man, that those who were educated in a corrupt religion could at once see and feel, and be prepared to change, every thing that was bad. Some old prejudices would still cling to them. Something would be allowed by them for the difficulty of effecting an entire change. Something proposed, or some abuses overlooked, from policy. No reformers, however enlightened themselves, can well go farther than Solon, to give the people such a system as they will bear. And it is difficult to admit the opinion, that Luther, a monk, or Calvin, or the Westminster divines saw the whole counsel of God, and entirely purified the established system, except indeed, on the ground of their being divinely inspired, which in this age, we think, will hardly be expressly avowed. The wise saying of the venerable pastor of the Leyden flock, Robinson, need not be repeated, that it would be strange, indeed, if the earliest reformers should have passed from such entire darkness into perfect light, after such a darkness had endured for 1200 years. It did indeed so happen, that the early reformers stopped at the *very threshold*. They were either so exhausted by the greatness of their noble efforts, or, which is more probable, were so affected by their former prejudices, that they shut the door at once against all further improvements, and seemed as anxious to be considered the founders of a *new and perfect* system, as if they had not seen the folly of the pretensions to infallibility of those who had preceded them—the papists. Hence they left un erased, in their creeds, a multitude of doctrines, entirely unscriptural, which were nothing but the shreds of catholic superstitions. Content with dethroning the mother of God, (as the Virgin Mary is called,) and the whole army of saints, they still preserved the Platonic mystery of the Trinity, and the still more exceptionable doctrines, which now threaten to render the self-constituted judge and executioner of Servetus, immortal. They put aside the direct and simple authority of our Saviour and his apostles, and placed their faith in an uninspired, honest, but deceived and violent minister of Geneva.

It is however sufficient matter of consolation, if not of exultation, at the close of ages, during which a majority of christians have held it a matter of duty and religious obligation not to think at all, but to receive all the doctrines which the darker ages have transmitted to them as incontrovertible truths, that there is a prospect of a new era in the church, as important as that of the first reformation;—an era, in which sober, serious, enlightened, and free inquiry will be deemed no unpardonable sin; in which we may lawfully inquire what is or is not true in the most momentous of all concerns, as we have long been permitted to do in the physical sciences; in which men may securely ask what said our Saviour and his apostles, and venture to reject the absurdities of the semibarbarian formers of creeds in the middle ages. It is indeed strange, that so much respect should be paid to the creeds established or promulgated by men, whose literature, philosophy, and science we reject with the utmost contempt. The reverence for human glossaries and explanations of the sacred text is most unaccountable, when we have the sacred volume itself, confessedly in a state of most unexampled purity, and when we are so much better fitted, than most of our predecessors have been, for its examination.

The two publications, whose titles stand at the head of this article, claim our attention on account of the interesting questions, connected with the rights and liberties of the christian community, to which they give rise. The first named pamphlet has been for some time before the public, and should have received attention at the time of its publication, had we not thought it best that the great question of principle and right, which is involved in the case it represents, should be discussed as separately as possible from the excitements of feeling, and local and personal allusions, which unavoidably attend the consideration of such a subject while the occasion is new. We cannot be certain, that even now, after the lapse of months, we shall be able to come to the general question with all the coolness and impartiality we could desire, because the violent and abusive style of this pamphlet presents perpetual occasions of irritation. In attempting, therefore, to establish our general positions, we shall take as little notice as possible (we cannot avoid taking some) of the particulars of this case, or the character of this book.

Neither is it our intention to review at large the excellent discourse of Dr. Bancroft. It is sufficient that it sustains the well earned reputation of its venerable author, a man, whose praise ought to be in all the churches, at least in all which aim at the restoration of the simplicity in faith, order and discipline which prevailed in the apostolic age. It ought never to be forgotten, in this period,

when so many able men have arisen, with the zeal and resolution to restore christianity to its original purity, that Dr. Bancroft, at a still earlier period, following at a little interval the footsteps of Chauncy and Mayhew, took a noble stand, and has uniformly maintained, at the hazard of his reputation and success in life, the purity of our religion, in its doctrines, discipline, and worship. This species of merit is very likely to be overlooked by those who are born and educated in days of greater liberality. They have very feeble notions of the dangers and difficulties which the first reformers of this second age of reformation had to encounter.

Our present object will lead us to consider particularly only that part of Dr. Bancroft's discourse, which is connected with the subject of the other pamphlet. It is the great question of the rights, forms, and liberties of christian churches, to which we would call the attention of our readers, and which we conceive are not only drawn in question, but denied by the "Statement" of Mr. Lamson's ordination. This pamphlet denies to the great body of christians some of their most important rights, and seeks to establish, what it would seem our religion of all others, is least calculated, and was the least designed to support, an *aristocracy among the brethren*; (the very terms themselves imply a contradiction;)—an aristocracy, not founded on talents, property, virtue, or superior piety, but on accident, giving to those who have joined the church, as it is technically called, a power over the comforts, opinions, property, and rights of their christian brethren, who worship in the same congregation, and whom a tenderness of conscience, or doubts as to the terms of a covenant often unscriptural, may have kept out of the pale of the church.

It is in opposition to this principle, that the love of truth and religious freedom has called us forth. We appear for christians generally, for the great body of christian worshippers, whose rights have long been usurped, and so long, that the usurpers, like the Holy Catholic Church, rest their claims on prescription and lapse of time; as if the rules which govern the title to an acre of ground, are to bind the conscience, and limit the express authority of Holy Writ. We state in the outset, that we deny any human authority to interpret the scriptures; and we hold that every church, by which we understand every congregation of christian worshippers, has the unalienable right to interpret the scriptures for themselves, in no wise restrained by the doctrines or rules of preceding councils, synods, or churches. We would however most respectfully consider the reasons alleged for any existing rule, order, or mode of discipline, and we would not

rashly make innovations, unless thereto moved by serious, intelligent, studious examination, and conviction of the errors of the past or prevailing establishments.

This single remark, unless it can be overthrown by shewing that there is a *scriptural authority* given to the representatives of the churches in *sæcula sæculorum*, which all the supporters of the *Divinum Jus* of councils, and synods, and presbyteries, have as yet failed to do, is of itself a sufficient reply to this laboured pamphlet.

If needlessly and unjustifiably to give the greatest possible pain to a christian pastor, to the council which introduced him to the holy office, and to the majority of a religious society; if to treat so solemn a subject with occasional displays of wit and levity be a great sin, which we fear it is, we are satisfied that the author of this pamphlet, in the hour of sickness or death, will suffer as much pain, as those who are injuriously treated by him could desire, *if they were not christians*.

It is from the internal evidence furnished by *the work itself*, that we have formed this opinion. From this source, and this alone, we infer the innocence of the persons whom he accuses; and the uprightness and excellent judgment and discernment of the venerable and learned council who advised the settlement of Mr. Lamson.

There is something very painful and humiliating in the reflection, that the most bitter disputes have frequently arisen among persons of the same family, fraternity, society, or village; and still more humbling to remark, that those controversies to which religion has given birth, have appeared to excite a more than ordinary degree of acerbity and virulence.

This is probably owing to the disappointment we feel when we are unexpectedly deprived of the friendship of those upon whom we most naturally depend for our common and every day enjoyments, and to the sentiment which leads us to consider it a matter of conscience (an unsound conscience however) to adhere more obstinately to our opinions on religious topics than on any others. Surely it is a *perversion of conscience*, since upon religion, of all topics, we ought to be the most indulgent and forbearing, granting more to the weakness of our neighbour, (if it be a weakness,) of which we are not constituted the judges, than on any other subject of morals, or manners, or principles. Intelligent men, candid, liberal men, will never feel so much distrust of their own opinions, and entertain so much charity for their neighbour, as on topics of religion, in which God has left so much power and imposed so entire and separate an obligation in

the individual—in which so much reposes in the secret of the heart, and so little in the exterior profession.

The pamphlet, on which we are about to make some remarks, may be divided into two parts entirely distinct.

The first regards the authority of the council, considered with relation both to the civil and ecclesiastical law, if there be any ecclesiastical law other than the scriptures, (which we deny.)

Secondly, the expediency or reasonableness of the decision of the council, technically called “their result.”

The second part we do not think it proper to discuss, for reasons which the author himself has given. There is no writer, ancient or modern, catholic or protestant, monkish or congregational, who has carried the doctrine of the authority of ecclesiastical councils higher or further than he has done. If therefore the council in this case was duly and regularly convened, on his own principles, it is not in the power of any other body to question its doings. It is indecorous, and subversive of all principle, to enter into the merits of their decision, as to the facts and principles before them. They were the sole, unamenable judges.—Their result should be considered as conclusive as the verdict of a jury, or the decision of a court of competent jurisdiction. This is the necessary consequence of the author’s own reasoning. For these reasons we think it fruitless, and worse than fruitless, to enter into the inquiry, whether on the facts proved before the council, their result was proper and principled—and we reject therefore as highly unbecoming, inconsistent and unprincipled, all the taunting insinuations, and severe reflections on the council and their proceedings. That council, were, under God, the sole judges of all the questions submitted to them, and a popular appeal from them, with garbled, *ex parte*, and mutilated statements of the evidence, is directly contrary to all the rules which govern tribunals, military, civil, or religious. It could not be hoped that any result, which any council could make in a case like the one at Dedham, would be satisfactory to all parties; *least of all* to those, who were resolved *not* to be satisfied, and who denied, in limine, the authority of the tribunal.

All impartial christians will however, be convinced, from the perusal of the result, that it was wise, and the only means of preserving any thing like the regular worship of God in that parish. Compromise was hopeless. Time would only widen rather than heal the breaches. It was beyond all human probability, that two thirds of a parish, if thwarted in the choice of a man, whom, after six months’ probation, they had unanimously approved,

would have united in a choice of another, selected by those who obstinately refused to yield their private opposition to so general a voice.

The whole argument in this pamphlet, against the expediency of settling or ordaining Mr. Lamson, may be comprized in this short proposition, "that six months' probation was insufficient, and that there was reasonable ground to believe that two thirds of the parish would charitably yield to the prejudices of one third." For ourselves, judging merely from the temper of this work, we are satisfied that a result which should have excluded Mr. Lamson, and forced the majority to a new choice, would only have been productive of a long and interminable religious feud, highly derogatory to the cause of our charitable religion—a dispute, which must finally have issued in a separation, which was the worst possible effect that could have followed from the ordination; but which the council had a right to hope would be *prevented* by his settlement.

That it was *not prevented*, may in a great degree be attributed to the illiberal and unforgiving spirit of the minority, and to this pamphlet, which denied the authority of the council, and thus gave occasion to weaker minds to make a schism in the church of Christ in Dedham.

It is admitted in this work, that the objections to the ordination of Mr. Lamson, did not arise *from any difference of religious opinions, or any disapprobation of those held by the candidate, nor from any objections to his moral character.* This is very happy—and it justified the ordaining council in the hope they expressed, that the objections would yield as soon as the question should be settled.

The conduct of the minority, in this case, has been, however, such as could not have been looked for in a liberal and enlightened age. The character of the pastor elect and ordained, has been treated with indecent levity, and unkind sarcasm. We have not read or heard of one case in the history of religious disputes between churches and parishes and their pastors, which affords so weighty reasons for withholding the absolute power contended for, from the bare majority of a church. The case itself proves, that the church is as likely to be illiberal, unjust, intemperate, and despotic as the parish; and this example goes far to confirm us in the opinion, that if such a power of absolute veto in cases of election, does not reside in the church, by the only authoritative canons, the scriptures, and the practice of the primitive church, we ought not to suffer or submit to the uncontrolled exercise of it.

Thus much it seemed important to say respecting this particular case. But the *principles* asserted and denied, with some degree of assurance in this case, are of far greater moment. It is to the christian world of little consequence, whether Mr. Lamson was, or was not, duly and canonically ordained—but it is of immense moment to ascertain, whether the body technically called “a church,” be in fact a superior, or even a distinct coequal body in christian societies, having a *veto* on the proceedings of the christian worshippers or brethren, who are owners of pews, are taxed, attend public worship—have been baptized, are in faith and worship, christians, but who have not yet asked for the privilege of being admitted to full communion. For ourselves, we do not hesitate to say, that we are not as yet satisfied that this question has been to this day fairly discussed—nor are we capable of discussing it as it ought to be. We merely propose to draw the attention of theological proficients to the subject.

That the whole argument in the pamphlet against Mr. Lamson's ordination, proceeds on the assumption, that there is such a body, *jure divino*, with perpetual succession and exclusive privileges, is most certainly true. It is true also, that the late learned chief justice Parsons, in two cases which came before the court, did seem to admit that such a body, distinct from the great mass of christian believers, did rightfully exist, although he very greatly limited its powers. Yet as the question, whether the church means any thing *more than all the christians* who worship in a particular place, was not *necessarily* before the court, and as it is a wise rule with judges not to decide incidentally any questions not involved in the case, we may venture to say, that the question is now entirely open. It is competent to us to discuss the point, whether the church, in the language of scripture, or in the writings of the fathers, meant any thing more than the whole body of baptized and worshipping christians.

We do not mean here to consider the numerous other senses in which the word *ecclesia*, or church, was used by the early christian writers. We shall speak of it only in the sense in which it was applied to a congregation of believers worshipping in one place.

Now we contend, and think we shall be able to shew, that there were never *two classes* of worshippers,—if we except the catechumens, who were not permitted to hear all the services, and who were unbaptized.

We expect to shew further, that the *right* of partaking the communion or eucharist, was common to *all* the congregation; but that many who belonged to the church did not partake of the

communion, and still were considered as brethren, and enjoyed all their rights as such.

In short, we hope to prove, that there is no better foundation for a *separate order* among the *laity*, than there is for three orders among the clergy, a doctrine which we congregationalists deny, and which lord chancellor King has most unanswerably disproved.

To minds accustomed to logical inquiries and reasoning, it will be useless to attempt to shew, that if we shall succeed in supporting these opinions, then all the objections urged on the part of the small majority of the small *church* in Dedham are fully refuted; and we at the same time prove, that it was not essential that a *new church* should have been gathered, and solemnly formed prior to Mr. Lamson's consecration, since, upon our supposition, there was at the time subsisting a scriptural church, who had long worshipped in that place, who had, as we hope to shew, the right of election of their presbyter or pastor, a right which they had regularly exercised by not only a vote of the majority, but of a majority of *two thirds*.

We shall take as our guide, lord chancellor King in preference to any other, because he is quoted with high respect, and as decisive authority, by the author of the pamphlet in question. We have other and the following reasons for selecting him as our guide. His fairness and impartiality, his learning, his piety; his high standing as a layman and lawyer, unbiassed by the unavoidable prejudices, which must creep into the minds of those, whose power and standing as dignitaries of the church are affected by such questions; but above all, because he quotes his authority for every sentiment, at large.

What was "*the church*" in its most usual acceptation?

"The usual and common acceptation of the word (church) is that of a particular church, that is, a *society of christians*, meeting together in one place under their proper pastors, for the performance of religious worship, and the exercise of christian discipline."*

He adds, that the church may be divided into two parts, "into the *people* that composed the body of the church, and those persons who were set apart for religious and ecclesiastical employments, or, to conform to our ordinary dialect, into the clergy and *laity*."†

* "The Constitution, Discipline, &c. of the primitive church, by an Impartial hand;" pages 7, 8. now known to have been written by Sir Peter King.

† On this head he cites Corinthians, I Epist. Homil. 11. in Jerem. p. 113, 114, vol. i.

The church, then, according to this authority, were the *society of christians*, worshipping in one place. They were divided into two classes, *clergy* and *laity*; not into three, *clergy*, *church members*, and *ordinary worshippers*.

So too, "*parish and church*" were in the language of the primitive church, convertible terms, or intended the same thing. "The epistle of Clemens Romanus, or the bishop of Rome, was to the *church of God*, *parishing* at Corinth, that is, dwelling or living at Corinth. So that a *parish* is the same with a particular church or a *single congregation*." Therefore he adds, "that a *parish* and a *particular church* are synonymous terms, signifying one and the same thing."*

"Ignatius condemns all those of that diocese (Ephesus) who did not assemble together in the church with the rest of the members thereof, to send up their prayers to God, as proud, self conceited, and justly condemnable."†

These surely must have been considered as church members, or they would not have been condemned, and yet they could not have been specially admitted, or the church would have compelled their attendance. Indeed, there is not a colour for the existence at that period, of two orders among the laity.

In the choice of bishops, all the people of the diocese met and voted in the election. "All the brethren met together in the church to choose a successor to Auterus, where *all the people* unanimously chose Fabianus; and on his death Cornelius was chosen bishop by the suffrage of the clergy and people;" or as it is expressed in the original, "*παντα λαον*" and "*Cleri ac plebis suffragio*."‡

"In all ORDINATIONS, *all the people* were consulted, and none were admitted into holy orders without their approbation."§

Again, all the *inhabitants* were admitted to communion. Justin Martyr writes, "that on Sunday *all the inhabitants* both of city and country met together, where the lector, or reader, read some portion of the Holy Scriptures, and the bishop preached unto them, *administered the eucharist*, and sent by the deacons part of the consecrated elements to those who were absent."||

From all the above passages, it seems, there was no distinction of classes among the laity; they are either described as the *populus*, or *plebs*, or *λαος*, i. e. the people.

* Lord Chancellor King, pages 16, 17.

† Same work, p. 28.

‡ Apud Euseb. lib 6. cap. 28. Cyprian Epist. 67. p. 198. Same work of chancellor King, p. 33.

§ Cites Cyprian Epist. ad Clerum et populum, p. 76. King, p. 35.

|| King, p. 42.

We shall hereafter consider the case of the catechumens, who were not christians, but only candidates for baptism.

We are well aware that an objection may be here stated, that "the people, the brethren, the inhabitants, the plebs, populus, or Laos," may be intended, in all these examples, to mean the *church members* of the laity, in contradistinction to the clergy; but we feel ourselves at no loss for an answer to this objection.

The first answer is, that those who claim a special privilege and rank, and exclusive powers and authority, are bound to shew their title by *express terms in holy writ*, or in failure of that, (which we well know from our own researches, they cannot furnish,) they are bound to prove that such was the practice of the *primitive churches*.

Prescription they cannot set up, not only because the reformation expressly proceeded on the wise ground, that no prescription can sanction error and abuses, directly in face of revelation, and because our very congregational church itself is either schismatic, or else lapse of time and uninterrupted usage are of no authority; but for a much better, more conclusive and unanswerable reason, that *all the churches* in Christendom, except *our own*, and one or two others, have wholly excluded the *laity* from any participation in ecclesiastical affairs, and know nothing about *churchmembers*. Do the *laity* elect the bishop of Rome, or any other catholic bishop? Do the *laity* have a voice in the election of the English bishops? Or of the Greek bishops? No; it is well known they have not. If then for 1500 years, the sound and well settled republican principles as to church government, adopted and practiced upon in the apostolic ages, and those which immediately succeeded them, have, by a common consent of usurpation, been set aside, what prescription have we, except that which may be derived from the practice of the congregational churches for the last 200 years? And are we sure that the first congregational reformers went back fully to the primitive simplicity of the early churches?

This is the question, and we think it perfectly open to discussion; the more so, because we know they had their weaknesses and their strong leaning towards intolerance. The independent clergy had enjoyed power too long under the church of England, to be willing to surrender it wholly. It is a lamentable proof of human weakness, but it is true, that there were few men who had a greater desire of power, or who exercised it with less scruple or less moderation, than the early presbyters and elders of the congregational church, in our country. They governed the *state* as well as the *church*; and for some time none but

church members were eligible to any considerable office. As the power of the clergy was almost absolute in the *church*, so it was their interest, that the *church* should have absolute power over the congregation.

We do not mean to deny their great purity and piety ; but they had mistaken views of religion, and it is notorious, that we, of this age, could not tolerate for one week, the discipline, the officious intermeddling in civil concerns, and the pious despotism, of the first pastors of this country.—We have not therefore, any thing like uninterrupted usage, as to the powers of the *Lay members of the church*. From the 4th to the 17th century they were slaves to a domineering clergy ; and surely the heterogeneous sects, and practices since the reformation, are no sufficient authority against scriptural doctrines and the practice of the early church.

But we are not content to rest the question on the ground, that the right set up by the present church communicants to the exclusive government of the church, ought to be proved by those, who claim it, in as much as it is in derogation of christian liberty. We mean to show the opposite opinion to be true. Lord Chancellor King, so highly and justly praised by the author of this pamphlet, in answer to the question, Who were church members in the primitive churches ? says, “in general all those that were *baptized* were looked upon as members of the church, and had a right to all the privileges thereof.”*

Most of the converts to christianity were adults, and they were obliged to undergo a novitiate, during which they were called Catechumens, were catechized and instructed. They were seated by themselves, and were not permitted to hear the whole service ; but as soon as they were *baptized*, they tarried at the celebration of the Eucharist. “When they were baptized, they commenced members of the *church universal*, and of *that particular church* wherein they were so baptized,† and became actual sharers and exerts of all the privileges and powers of the faithful.”‡

Is there any evidence, that, in the apostolic age, any person, who had been *once* baptized, ever became afterwards a Catechumen—or was by any special form, made one of the brotherhood ?

* Cites Cypr. Epist. 63, Sec. 5.

† This is a complete reply to the sneer of the author of the pamphlet in review, at a question of one of the Reverend Council, who asked “How many churches are there of our Lord ?” Meaning to intimate, that admission to one ought to be an admission to all, as there was in effect but one christian church.

‡ Lord Chan. King. p. 103.

Were the three thousand that were baptized by Peter in one day, ever formally admitted to the church afterwards? Are not the "believers"—the "baptized"—and the "brethren" used throughout the Scriptures as synonymous terms?

Is there any trace of the formal *admission to the church* of the children of believers, who had been baptized? It was not unfrequent, that a man being converted, he and all his household were baptized at once. Is there any ground to believe that such persons were ever after formally admitted to the church?

We put these questions, because we know how they must be answered, and because they shew the nature of the usurpation which has been attempted in the christian church.

It is well known, that after the first three or four centuries, the laity lost all their privileges in the church, except that of partaking of the ordinances, and even that was granted or withheld at the pleasure of the officers. This usurpation has endured to this day in the Latin and Greek churches, that is, in three quarters of all Christendom. It still continues in the English Episcopal church, and partially, and indeed substantially so, in the Scotch presbyterian.

So that, instead of an uninterrupted succession of churches, in the sense in which that word is used by the congregationalists, the *church in our technical sense* never had an existence, till the separation of the independents from the presbyterians in the seventeenth century. It is in religion, *an infant innovation*—and our records, yes, the very authorities cited by the work under review, and others, which we shall cite, prove incontestably, that from its birth to this hour, it has been the constant subject of contest. It never would have been admitted for a moment, as a principle, that the church was a distinct body, with coequal powers, not only the rival of the christian society at large, but having a complete veto on their acts, if it had not been, that the politic union of church and state, which the New England puritans copied from their friends, the parliamentary christians, made it necessary for ambition to play the hypocrite and enter the pale of the church, so that the majority of the people and the majority of the church were synonymous, or at least, were the same persons; but as soon as this ceased to be the case, quarrels arose, and there has been an incessant struggle on the part of the laity, to reacquire the privileges of which they were deprived—to regain the powers which in the early ages all the people enjoyed, and the rights of nature and of conscience—in other words to consider the congregation *the church*, in the primitive and scriptural sense.

We do not mean to intimate, that it is not praiseworthy to form within christian societies special associations for the mutual en-

couragement of each other in the christian work. We believe them to be of great use. They are some checks on human passions, some aid to human weakness. Those who have made a more open and public profession of their design to devote themselves to God and religion, will feel under stronger obligation to be circumspect. Subordinate motives may help to restrain from open sin, and thus even human weakness may be made subservient to its strength. It is not the only case, in which, by the wise constitution of our intellectual and moral natures, even our weakness and passions, which if indulged would be our destruction, are converted into the means of our preservation and improvement.

Nor do we mean to say, that it may not be useful to have some form of introduction to the participation of the Eucharist. There ought to be some mode of ascertaining the fitness of the communicant for the participation of so solemn and affecting a rite. But the table of our Lord should not be surrounded with brambles, and thorns, and nettles. The entrance to it should be wide, and open, and inviting. Still all this part of the institution should be considered wholly as of a religious character, and as conferring no privileges, no power, distinct from the great mass of worshipping christians.

The truth is, that although this new association called a "church," first introduced by the independents, and utterly unknown in the primitive church, is assuredly lawful, because not forbidden in scripture; yet it becomes unlawful when it is perverted to the purposes of acquiring power, or is used for the gratification of human passions. This it must be liable to, so long as it is placed in the jealous light of a claimant of exclusive privileges, with the sole power of admission of members into its own body. Indeed there is a very curious and unfortunate suggestion of the writer, whose work we are reviewing—which is, that when the church is small, the remedy is easy for the discontented by joining the church to command or acquire a majority.

And indeed it is true, that this horrible remedy might have been resorted to in this case, if the advocates for Mr. Lamson had been as unprincipled as this writer represents them. A competent number might have joined the church, and thus have secured the vote of that body. But we call it a *horrible remedy*, because it is dreadful to combine specific party or personal objects, with so solemn a ceremony, as the entering into a special covenant, to walk more circumspectly in the way which leads to eternal life, than the general mass of christians too frequently do.

We consider then, "the church," as it is now constituted, a holy, lawful and praiseworthy association of a character purely

spiritual; and that its ends and designs may be the more effectually attained, it is very important that its members should not enjoy temporal power, nor be by possibility engaged in worldly disputes. Their power and influence in the proper church of Christ, the christian society in which they worship, must be considerable—must be greater than that of any individuals; they will have their own votes, and will enjoy as much power as the saints did in the primitive churches; they will moreover enjoy an advantage which the latter did not; they will be a separate corps, and will carry into the meetings of the society an *esprit du corps*, a feeling of the interests of their order, and will act with more concert. Surely this influence is enough for the professors of a religion which teaches humility.

Could it even be proved, that in the early ages of the church, when it was, (as all christian societies should be,) purely democratical, no persons were admitted to the “church” without entering into a special covenant, and that, to that body alone pertained all christian powers and privileges; it would by no means follow, that such a course is necessary in the present age. When the greater part of the world was heathen, and men had been brought up either in the doctrines of the heathen mythology or in those of the Jewish dispensation, it might have been proper to require a distinct declaration and positive proof of the conversion and sincerity of the individual; but in an age like the present, in which christianity in civilized countries, is admitted by all to be the only true religion, there is no reason for requiring any other proofs of a man’s belief in it, than his attendance on its ordinances and worship, his support of it by his talents, and property, and a christian deportment. This is quite enough, at least for all the purposes of election and ecclesiastical power; it is certainly sufficient to authorize their claim to *choose their teachers and pastors*.

We have said, and we conscientiously believe it, that a “church” in the modern sense, an order of laity distinct from the general mass of believers, originated in the seventeenth century, and that its assumption to rule the affairs of the church has been constantly disputed, and often fluctuating.—We now proceed to the proof of it.

From the year 1630, in which Boston was settled, and Massachusetts assumed a character as a sovereign state, under the King, to the year 1648, the principles of church government were not settled. The synod of 1648 proves this fact. It was assembled solely with the view of settling, not points of doctrine, but church discipline. It is, we think, very disingenuously concealed by the author of the “Statement,” that this famous platform itself met

with great opposition at the time. Even at that day, when every member of the general court was a *church member*, men shrunk back from the proposition of making the church so truly aristocratical—and it was not till after a new synod had been convened, it was not till thirty-two years after their adoption of the Platform, that it was *approved*, and not even then made a law by the Legislature.

In 1692, only 12 years after the adoption of the Platform, so much dissatisfaction prevailed, that the Legislature repealed the most important part of it, and vested the choice of Pastors, in the *major part of the inhabitants of each town*. This is precisely the footing on which it ought to stand, and for which we now contend. It is at any rate an illustrious struggle for the general freedom of christians, and is an interruption of the doctrine of prescription and perpetual succession.

The clergy and church, (or rather some of them, for there was always a formidable party for more liberal opinions) rallied, and the next year restored the church, (the narrow church in our view) to its usurped powers, but required the *concurrence of the people in the choice*. And why should the people be parties at all if they were not truly christians, and if truly christians why should they not have *equal* powers? We answer, for the same, and for no better reason than that, in all France, Italy, or Spain, or even in England, i. e. within the national establishment, the people have *no* participation in choosing their most important teachers—that the church think they can judge better—that it is a source of power and influence, which men never yield without compulsion. Flushed with their success, the church party in 1695 hazarded the bold measure of transferring the whole power of election to the church and to an ecclesiastical council. Even our author acknowledges, that he would never wish to see this law *revived*—and that he does not know how far it was *ever* acted upon. We can tell him, that it was never in any single case attempted to be enforced; and we regret it most deeply. The surest course for relief from usurpation is its being felt in all its power, and long ere this, had the act of 1695 been enforced, the christian inhabitants of this state would have been restored to all their rights as granted, or rather admitted and recognized, by the act of 1692. Can there be a stronger proof of this act being contrary to the just principles of christian freedom, than its having, in such an age, fallen entirely dead from the legislative press?

From 1695 when this dead born act was passed, to the time of the making of our constitution, the practice of churches and parishes appears to have proceeded generally on the principle of the act of 1693, that is, with the exercise of coequal powers by

church and parish—often, however, resisted and opposed, and producing frequent appeals and disputes. But the church exercised its assumed power with delicacy, and in most cases yielded to the wishes of the parish.

Little can be inferred from acquiescence in such cases. Supposed right on one side, induces the other party to yield something. Conscious defect of title, and the odium of exerting a power so opposed to all the feelings and principles of our government induced the other party to forbear a direct opposition to the public will. Elections of pastors became a matter of compromise. But upon the adoption of our constitution, it became necessary that principles should be settled. It is therein expressly provided, that *religious societies*, not churches, should have the right to choose their *own teachers*. All the laws heretofore subsisting must yield to this sovereign authority, and all the power that has since been tacitly conceded to the “church” by the “society,” has been one of courtesy—a courtesy certainly commendable—a courtesy to be preserved as long as the church do not manifest a disposition to thwart the wishes of the society.

Since the adoption of the constitution, the absolute right in the last resort is vested in the christian society,—the parish,—the congregation,—the great mass of christian worshippers. The expressions of the learned Judge Sedgwick and Chief Justice Parsons imply no more than this—“The churches are very useful and respectable establishments—they were dear to our ancestors. Indulge them in giving their voice—let the church have its influence—let its members, if they choose, for they exercise a double power, (an anomaly in a civil or ecclesiastical republic,) of voting in two capacities, vote as a body, and as members of the society at large. Agree with them if you can, but if you cannot, the ultimate power resides with the parish.”

This then is the pretended uninterrupted usage of which so much is said. An assumption, denied and taken away twelve years after it was sanctioned, altered and modified from time to time, and finally wholly withdrawn by the people at the time of forming their constitution, and restored to the state in which it stood in the primitive church.

We have hitherto exhibited very little of our author, for reasons already given. A few passages however require to be particularly remarked upon.

He asserts, that, “during the three first centuries of the christian era, and until that religion was patronized by the civil power, none could have the appellation of christians, but those who turned from *paganism*, and *openly and individually* professed their faith.” page 26.

Now if this were true, our reasoning would be entirely overthrown; but it is notoriously opposed to the facts, and scarcely less than absurd. What, let us ask, was the state of those children still under age, who were baptized by the Apostles, when their parents were converted? Were they not called christians? And what was the condition of the nine generations descended from the first converted christians during the three first ages? Were they not called christians, and admitted to baptism without going through the novitiate of Catechumens? Or will this infallible author contend, that the christians had no children for the first three hundred years? Children of believing parents were entitled to baptism of *right*, and were always in common parlance, in the Epistles of the fathers, and of the Apostles, considered as part of the "christian society."

"Baptism was always precedent to the Lord's Supper, and none were admitted to receive the Eucharist till baptized."*

"Children received the Eucharist in the primitive church, which is so well known, that I shall only urge a passage of Cyprian, where he tells a long story of a sucking girl, who so violently refused to taste the sacramental wine, that the Deacon was obliged forcibly to open her lips and pour it down."†

How could any one, with Chancellor Kings's book in his hand, write a sentence so unfounded as the one above quoted?

We may assert then, that the children of believing parents were entitled to baptism and after baptism were church members; and of course that the "Πας λαος," the "plebs," the "populus," above quoted, meant the whole christian society, which was synonymous with "church," and equally so with "parish."

The persons, therefore, who called the council to ordain Mr. Lamson, were the scriptural church.

In the year 1668, our author says, a declaratory act was passed by the general court, explanatory of a former one, by which it "was enacted and declared, that by the church is meant such as are in *full communion* only."

Did it not occur to him, that for thirty-five years after the first act there must have been some contest and some doubt, else why this explanatory act? And further, that if by the "church" in primitive times, was meant all christians, or the great body of christian worshippers, and all baptized persons had a right to com-

* Cites Justin Martyr 2, page 97.

† De lapsis, § 20, p. 234. Ch. King's work, above, 2d part. 46.

munion, it was not in the power of the legislature to bind future churches, or religious societies, by any act to the contrary?

Our author talks much, and often of "imposing a pastor over a church against its own consent"—that "the church would be no longer free." "If one kind of man may be put over them, another may—one to whom they may have an aversion," &c.

No doubt, a parish might choose a Papist or a Mahometan—or a Jew; but there is no great danger of such a case, and it is not one of those evils against which wise men would guard. The radical error on which our author proceeds, is, that the church have not only other distinct, and separate rights and interests from those of the rest of their christian brethren, but that they are *hostile to each other*—that the parish, who are generally (taking the average of all the congregations of the state) about *four fifths* of the whole, have no concern about religion, are either infidels, or vicious, and that they will finally bring about the destruction of all religion. Such a pretence, on the face of it, is in the highest degree unjust and absurd. And if the state of all "churches" be as bad as the author of this pamphlet is pleased to represent that of the church in Dedham, making, in the whole, one fifth part of the members to be men of immoral lives and conversation, we cannot, from our more candid view of society, believe, that our holy religion would be in less safe keeping in the custody of the parish at large. Far be it from us to intimate that we place the smallest reliance on the slanderous imputations of this writer.

But it is not proposed by us to divest the members of the "church" of their rights—Let them vote with the parish—Let them exhort, persuade, and convince, if they can; but if they fail so to do, let them submit to the opinion and wishes of the majority, and endeavour to cultivate a kind, charitable, and conciliatory temper.

Much is said about the cruelty to the "church" in this and other cases. But it is forgotten that the "parish" have rights too, and that there is equal danger of cruelty to them. Indeed cases of infinitely greater hardship may occur. We might cite actual and existing ones, where the majority of a small church have succeeded in imposing a clergyman on a parish, against the decided wish of a large majority of the worshippers. Infinite intrigues, even the prostitution of the sacred covenant on entering into the church, may be the consequence of admitting, that a majority of one or two in the "church" can settle the important question of fixing a religious teacher for life.

The Middleborough case, to which this author alludes, is full of instruction, and pregnant with truths that are extremely important to the freedom of christians at large.

It is important, first, because the authority of the synod of 1648, and of the Cambridge Platform, was *never* undisputed in our country. Of this we have already given the history. Some churches adhered to a greater, and some to a less number of positions and parts of it. To some points of doctrine and discipline none of the churches, probably at any time, fully adhered. Thus it is doubted whether ruling elders have been chosen in most, if in any of the congregational churches, for more than a century.

Again, the church alone, both *elected* and *deposed* according to the Platform, and yet, though the Platform was ordered to be printed thirty-two years after its adoption, it is doubted whether there ever was a case since 1680 of an election and deposition by the church. There are many other parts, that have fallen into desuetude.

Secondly, because, if the Platform, though adopted at a synod, and ordered to be printed, has never been followed in *all* things, in *some* not at all; it becomes a merely historical inquiry how far it has been adopted and practised upon, and at how early a period deviations took place. In this view the Middleborough case is important;—and here let us remark, that it is only in controverted cases that the principles of law, civil or ecclesiastical, are settled. If there have been four hundred ordinations in which church and parish have concurred harmoniously, they prove nothing, but that the parish, having the same opinions, had no wish to dispute the pretensions of the church—but it ought not to be forgotten, that there has not been one election or deposition according to the Platform, that is, by the church alone, since 1692.

This Middleborough case embodies and shews forth in a strong light, the merciless abuses to which a parish may be subjected by a capricious, intriguing brotherhood, only because they had a majority of one or two in a body that constituted only a fifth of a town or precincts. In the year 1744, on the death of the Rev. William Thacher, pastor of the first church in Middleborough, a majority of the church members having become “new lights,” as they were then called, and thus quitted the opinions of the majority of the congregation, were resolved not to settle any but an enthusiast of their own sentiments. They vexed the parish from May to the 9th of September with votes and resolutions. On that day the majority of the church, without consulting the parish, brought a clergyman of their own opinions, when they knew that the parish committee had provided one, and broke into the meeting house. Great disorder ensued, but the parish succeed-

ed, and politely invited the clergyman selected by the church to preach half the day.

The *parish* and minority of the "church," applied to a council for advice, and they recommended to the church to give way, and asserted it to be "*the custom of the several parishes, when destitute of a minister, to supply the pulpit by a committee chosen by the whole parish.*"

Notwithstanding this, the church proceeded to call a minister of their own persuasion, and *actually ordained* him over a majority of the church! The book in our possession does not expressly state what was the nature of the remedy which the parish and church minority had against this usurpation. Yet it is almost necessarily to be inferred from it, that they did get relief, and settled a minister (as our author would say) by an *imposition on the church.*

This case is important, as it shews, 1st, To what abuses societies are liable by the fickleness, folly, or obstinacy, (as the case may be,) of a single able, influential church member. 2d, That councils *may* be called, and *will* convene at the request of other bodies than the "church." 3d, That as early as 1744 the *parishes* were in the enjoyment of their natural right of selecting whom they would hear, and of course what opinions they would prefer, and an ecclesiastical council recommended it as a good course. We believe that other societies in the state have been in the constant practice of uniting the church and noncommunicants, on all questions relating to the settlement of a minister.

We have now done with the "Statement," only observing in conclusion, that the spirit, certainly not a *christian* one, in which it is written, affords the best possible justification of the ordaining council, who perceived that reconciliation, entire reconciliation, could not be hoped for. We did intend to give some extracts which might justify us in this remark, and in the disapprobation we have occasionally expressed. But we think it best not to call up feelings by dwelling on a particular case, which might influence the judgment of readers in regard to the general principle, and which, for the honour of religion, we wish might sleep forever.

We turn with pleasure to Dr. Bancroft, who has expressed sentiments on this subject free from the spirit of party, and manifestly intended and calculated to spread the gospel, instead of maintaining the exclusive rights of a single body in christian churches.

"The gospel," he says, "contains few positive institutions. No definite rules are given by which to model the outward form of a church, or to adjust the public exercises of religion. In these res-

pects much is left to human discretion and convenience under the comprehensive rule,—Let all things be done in decency and order.

“Christianity was designed to be an *universal* religion. In its constitution and principles it is fitted for this purpose. Its author left nations and communities of men at liberty to adapt external forms to the state of society, to the nature of civil government, and to the general improvements of *particular* ages and countries.

“Overlooking this permission, in how many instances have ecclesiastics considered the *form* of a church, and the manner of the public exercises of religion, as an essential part of the christian system? On this subject deadly disputes have been raised. ‘*This* has been declared the only true church, and *that* denounced as having no title to the name.’

“Every christian society ought to guard their public institutions with circumspection, and take heed that no forms be introduced which are inconsistent with the principles of the gospel, or which may obstruct the promotion of its merciful design. What church has so far receded in its polity from the plan of the gospel as to have forfeited the name of christian? What communion is so corrupt in its exercises, that the honest and sincere worshipper in it will not be accepted by his Maker?

“Our ancestors in the first settlement of this country adopted the congregational system, and they early introduced the Cambridge Platform as their ecclesiastical constitution. But our ecclesiastical proceedings have *not been* marked with *uniformity*. The rights of the church and congregation have not been distinctly understood, nor exercised through succeeding ages by consistent principles.”

He then proceeds to give a history of our churches conformable to that which we have endeavoured to display, and adds,

“Have our ecclesiastical proceedings been conformed to this state of things? Many appear to entertain vague views of the ecclesiastical relation of a minister with the *great body of his society*, and in some instances, churches have assumed a power in religious transactions, which is neither conformable to the civil regulations of the state, nor consistent with the principles of christian liberty. In many of our parishes, only a minor part of the serious members of the society are communicants. This neglect of a duty explicitly enjoined, is to be lamented, but the fact is undeniable.”

He then proceeds to assign some probable reasons of the neglect of this duty, and adds,

“Shall we deny the christianity of those, who, from these causes, absent themselves from the table of our Lord, though they manifest a christian profession by supporting christian institutions, and by habitual attendance on the offices of public worship, and though their conversation be such as becometh the gospel? *I dare not*.

“What law of the gospel invests communicants as a *distinct* body, with exclusive privileges in the election of the minister of the chris-

tian society? The term, church, in the New Testament, is expressive not of a *distinct portion* of the christian society, but of the assembly of christians."

We have in these passages the sentiments of one of the most judicious of our divines, in support of the doctrines of chancellor King, which we have endeavoured to lay before our readers.

Dr. Bancroft adds,

"It will, I believe, be conceded, that in primitive times the *whole christian community* was known as one body. In one united society they attended public worship, and joined in all the ordinances of the gospel. No distinction was *then* made between the sacrament of the supper and other christian rites. For at least 300 years, pastors were elected, and all ecclesiastical affairs managed by the assembly of christians, without distinction of *church and congregation*."

Here then we find our opinions fully supported by one of an order most interested to maintain the power of the church, of which he is one of the heads. The day may arrive, (though it has not yet come,) in which a Massachusetts synod, whose powers however are only advisory, will so far modify the Cambridge Platform, always received with hesitation, and finally nearly obsolete, as to restore the churches of Christ to their original purity and simplicity. We congratulate the friends of christianity, that it has pleased God in these latter days to raise up able and upright men, who are disposed to complete the work of reformation, which our fathers, in an age of civil war and great darkness, began, but were not permitted to finish.

NOTES.

I. The synod of 1648, which formed the Platform, was even at that day regarded with jealousy. Hubbard, in his history, (and he was orthodox enough,) says that the synod was looked upon with a jealous eye, "because the main end was for an agreement of one uniform practice in all the churches to be commended to the general court, which seemed to give power either to the synod or the court (the authority of both of which in religious affairs they denied) to compel the churches to practise what shall be so established; but, being assured that the synod would have no authoritative power, the objections were withdrawn."—Hubbard, 533.

"Still *many* of the churches could not swallow it, because they feared it was the intention to have ecclesiastical laws to bind the church."—Idem.

Many further quotations on this topic could be made to the same effect, but we have exceeded very greatly our proposed

limits. Many of these quotations may be found in the notes subjoined to "An Inquiry into the right to change the Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Congregational Churches of Massachusetts." Published by Wells and Lilly, 1816.

II. There is one representation of the author of the statement on the Dedham ordination, which we choose to set apart as pre-eminent in its injustice and want of truth. Referring to the second ex parte council, called by 18 persons of the "church" in Dedham, the author says, "We are authorized to say that they (the council) had *but one opinion* as to the irregularity and inexpediency of Mr. Lamson's ordination."

It is obvious, that as *eight members* of that council *voted against the result*, this assertion could only be founded on *private* declarations of the dissenters. Now we undertake to say, that this is wholly untrue, and that those who dissented neither expressed nor entertained any such opinion. Our authority is derived from those who have conversed with them, and they declare this representation to be utterly unfounded. It is precisely in character with all the other calumnious insinuations of this writer.

III. We have expressed a doubt as to the manner in which the case at Middleborough terminated. We have since ascertained that the parish succeeded in settling a minister against the will of the church. It is not a proof merely, as the author we are reviewing considers, that men will *violate the law*, but it is a proof that the law was *unsettled*; and to render this more certain, we will cite the case of the Brattle Street church in Boston, which, from its foundation, has asserted and maintained the rights for which we contend. In elections there has never been a distinction, for more than a century, between the church and the parish, or ordinary worshippers, and yet they have never been out of communion on account of their liberality. What names have we more venerable than those of Colman, Cooper, Thacher and Buckminster?

IV. This sentiment for which we have been contending, is not of recent date, and ought not to startle weak minds on account of its novelty.

Cotton Mather, in his *Ratio Disciplinæ*, more than a century ago, admits that the right claimed by the church was odious and offensive. He says, "though the law of the province about choosing and settling a minister be a very wholesome law, and has much of the gospel in it, yet, there *grows too much upon the inhabitants* who are *not yet* come into the communion, a disposition to supersede it and overrule it. *Many* people would not allow the church any privilege to go *before them* in the choice of a pastor. The clamour is, "*we must maintain him.*"

And we ask what more *reasonable* clamour? Especially if he had added the nobler, less mercenary, and probably the true ground,—“We must *hear* him, whether we like his opinions or not. Be he wise or foolish; illiterate or learned: teach he truth or falsehood, we must, during his life, be compelled to *hear* him.” Is it strange that men have struggled for a century to recover this right? Or is it not rather strange, that from the incipient opposition to the arrogant pretensions of the church in 1710, we have never succeeded in getting the principle settled in our favour?

V. We had resolved not to extend our notes beyond those inserted above, yet having met with some ancient tracts published in New England, which fully confirm all the doctrines we have laid down, and have the additional value of puritanical authority, in support of those of the early fathers, and of chancellor King, we ought not to withhold them.

The first are taken from an *authoritative* work; (so far as authority can be given to a work in an age of imperfect light;) it is entitled “Propositions concerning the subject of Baptism, &c.” by a synod of elders and messengers of churches in Massachusetts, in 1662; assembled by appointment of the general court, and by the general court recommended to the consideration of all the churches.

We cite it merely to shew, that our views with regard to those who are church members, and who were so considered in early times, conform to the ideas of the synod of 1662; fourteen years after the Platform.

They begin with this catholic sentiment, for maintaining which, the liberal clergy are now so often abused by the self-styled orthodox.

“That in matters of religion, not so much what *hath* been practised or held, as what *should* be, and what the *word of God prescribes* ought to be our inquiry or rule. The people in Nehemiah’s time are commended for doing as they *found written in the law*, though *from the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day* the children of Israel *had not done so*. Neh. viii. 14. So in 2 Chron. xxx. 5. 26: 2 Kings xxiii. 21, 22. They did not tye themselves to former use and custom, but *to the rule of God’s written word*, and so *should we*.”

To the support of our doctrine, the synod cite Mr. Hooker. “Suppose a *whole congregation* should consist of such who were children to parents *now deceased*, who were confederate; their children were *true members* according to the rules of the gospel, by the profession of their *father’s covenant*, *THOUGH* they should

not make any *personal* and *vocal* expression of their engagement as their fathers did." Hooker's Survey, part I, p. 48.

It would be impossible for us to dictate to the learned Hooker were he alive, words more apposite to our argument. And are we not all in this age the *children* of confederate parents?

But it may be said this extends to *ONE* generation only. No; "We maintain that the believing parent covenants and confesseth for himself and his *posterity*." Same author, part 3, p. 25.

Mr. Philips, speaking of a people made partakers of God's covenant, and *all the privileges outwardly* belonging thereto, saith, "Themselves and all that *ever* proceed from them, continue in the same state, parents and children successively, *so long as the Lord continues the course of his dispensation*." Philip's reply, p. 126.

Again, "A *company* became, or *are a church*, either by conversion, or *institution*, or by continuance of the same constituted churches successively by *propagation* of members who *are all born* in the church state, and belong unto the church, and *are 'a church'* successively so long as God shall continue his dispensation, *EVEN AS WELL AND AS FULLY AS THE FIRST*." Same work of Philips, p. 145.

"Mr. Shepard, in defence of the nine positions, page 143, hath this expression," "concerning the infants of church members; they are subject to censures whensoever they offend the church, as others are;" and in 1649, in a letter to a friend, he says, "concerning the *membership* of children, which he proveth by sundry arguments, *that they are members*, and sheweth at large what great good there is in children's membership. In which discourses he asserteth, that as they are members in their infancy, *so they continue* members when they are grown up *till* for their *wickedness* they be cast out."

This writer adds, what many would hardly dare to say even in this liberal age, "That there is *as much* danger (if not more) of the degenerating and apostatizing of *churches* gathered of *professing* believers, as of those that rise out of the seed of *such*."

How could our present system of exclusion, and aristocrätical pretensions have grown up in a church, in which a synod, *after* the platform, published such scriptural truths? Is it not time to vindicate the rights of believers, and to remove the stumbling blocks which keep so many away from the table of our Lord?

"Mr. Prudden also is cited, as having written in 1651, three years after the Platform, "that the children of church members,

are members ;" which he supports by an abundance of argument and authority.

Mr. Nathl. Rogers, in a letter, 1652, says, "To the question concerning the children of church members, I have nothing to oppose, and I wonder any should deny them to be *members too.*"

From these authorities, which the synod cite as their justification, they conclude, "That it was the judgment of those *worthies* in their time, that the children of church members are *members of the church as well as their parents*, and do not cease to be members by becoming adult, until in some way of God they be cast out ; and that they are subject to church discipline." It is true that there is an intimation, that though church members, they are required to own the covenant before they are admitted to a particular rite, the communion ; yet this does not impair their civil or other ecclesiastical rights. They are *members of the church*, and have all the privileges of other members in the transaction of its affairs. If *subject to its discipline* they must be entitled to the exercise of its powers. To be *church members*, and yet *not church members*, would be an absurdity. This synod completely supports our doctrine, that the church, corporately considered, includes all professing christians, and their descendants. Hooker's authority first cited, is the fullest, and states explicitly, "that a *whole society*, (in which there is not a single man who has made a *personal and vocal* profession) but whose parents were in covenant, are true members of the church."

The question is therefore we conceive, at rest. It seems however that the doctrine of this synod was attacked by the Baptists, and was most elaborately defended in another tract by sundry elders of the synod of 1662.

This work has the fault of its age, of proving what no man could deny, and of believing that in the multitude of words there is wisdom. There is only one part we shall quote, because it puts an end to a possible objection, that might be started, that the descendants of church members could not exercise *all* the rights of church members without a *personal* engagement.

The Baptists pressed them with this difficulty ; "If your *children* are *ipso facto members*, then if all the parents should die, *they*, the children, though *not expressly admitted*, be entitled to a *vote in church affairs*, which you now deny to them."

Our congregational ancestors were not puzzled or appalled at this objection. They boldly replied, as we contend at the present day. "But we say that this *second generation*, continuing in a *visible* profession of the covenant, faith, and religion of their fa-

thers, are a *true church of Christ*, though they have not yet made any *explicit personal expression* of their engagement as *their fathers did*."

ARTICLE X.

A Sermon, exhibiting some of the principal doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, by which that Church is distinguished from other denominations of Christians; by WILLIAM EDWARD WYATT, A. M., Associate Minister of St. Paul's parish, and professor of Theology in the University of Maryland. Baltimore. Joseph Robinson. pp. 44.

Letters on the ministry, ritual, and doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church; addressed to the Rev. Wm. E. Wyatt, D. D. Associate Minister of St. Paul's parish, Baltimore, and Professor of Theology in the University of Maryland; in reply to "a Sermon exhibiting some of the principal doctrines of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States;" by JARED SPARKS, A. M. Minister of the First Independent Church of Baltimore. Baltimore, N. G. Maxwell. pp. 268.

SINCE Episcopacy sustained in 1763, the formidable assault of Dr. Mayhew, and to shield it, the rector of Cambridge and the archbishop of Canterbury interposed alike in vain, it has made no progress among us, such as could be satisfactory to its friends. The writings of that admirable man gave the alarm through New-England, and awoke the old congregational spirit. The measures of the English society* were disconcerted; and it was fain to turn again to the new settlers and the Indians, and leave the descendants of Puritans to take care of themselves. The revolution succeeding, of course did the cause of the English establishment no good; and the most important incident in its history, among us, since that time, is the separation from it, and open avowal of Unitarian sentiments, of one of the principal churches in its communion.

In other parts of the country it has been different. In New-York, the rich endowment of Trinity, and, of late, the exertions of an active individual, have given a currency to Episcopal peculiarities, and church has pursued log-house with no

* Our readers are aware that the writings of Dr. Mayhew referred to, were occasioned by the society established under king William, "for the propagation of the gospel in foreign parts," having engaged in proselyting operations in New-England.

tardy pace, toward the savage frontier of the state. In Virginia, the generation of clergy, who, as Bishop White with beautiful simplicity relates, "continued to enjoy the glebes, without performing a single act of religious duty, except, perhaps, that of marriage,"* in course of time was extinct, and under the auspices of bishop Moore, a somewhat better day is understood to have begun. In Maryland, it was not surprising, that, pursued by the Catholics on the one side, and the Methodists on the other, many should be glad to find shelter in an establishment, in which superstition assumes a less repulsive shape, and discipline and pomp do something to keep out fanaticism. In Connecticut, the abuse of spiritual power has created an opposition, which has placed itself, as every wise political opposition will, under that organization which will make it most effective. Almost every where, the church has been aided by the general prevalence of the spirit of inquiry, re-acting on those who do not feel this spirit. Encouraged as it is in the word of God, it is resisted by the indifference of most men on the subject of religion. Their dislike of trouble, they call love of peace; and when they are told that the articles of faith are but articles of union, that though the church seems authoritative and precise, yet after all, the church means nothing; and if they will not contradict, they may believe any thing, or not believe any thing, just as they will,—they are satisfied that the church is the place for them. From these causes, among others, it is no longer the insignificant body that it was, when nine clergymen and four laymen met in New-Brunswick, in 1784, and projected an American Episcopate. Bishop Hobart's visitations, we are told, are to more than an hundred parishes, and bishop Kemp's to nearly as many.

It is characteristic of this church, that its pretensions have always risen with its power. In England, a man cannot carry a pair of colours, till he has taken the sacrament according to the forms of the national church; nor can a dissenting clergyman solemnize a marriage. Among us, the clergy and members of this communion have always been regarded with a well-deserved respect and good-will, which, as yet, they have not endangered by challenging more. They have stood on the same ground with other denominations, recommending themselves by orderly Christian worship, and good Christian practice; but we suppose not one in an hundred of our readers ever heard the plea urged, of an exclusive right to the discharge of the sacred office being vested in their ministry. In the powerful diocese of Maryland, it seems, it is otherwise; and the readers of Dr. Wyatt's sermon in this age of sober sense and theological learning, have the trial

* *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church.* p. 59.

appointed to them, of reading "that to the order of bishops alone, belongs the power of ordaining ministers; and that an ordination performed by the hands of a *priest*, deacon, or layman, or by any number of either, would be devoid of every degree of validity and efficacy, in conferring spiritual office and power." It is this lofty claim, which declares the most religious part of the country to be almost without a ministry, that makes the matter of the controversy. We, on our parts, make no objection to a clergyman that he has been ordained by a bishop, and wears a surplice; nor would we complain much, though he should kneel at the communion, and make the sign of the cross in baptism. But according to this writer, one to whom the instructions and ordinances of religion are dispensed by a minister, who has attained and discharges his office after a different manner, would as well, or better, not receive them at all. It is this arrogant pretension to a superiour and exclusive official right that we repel, and not the claim of churchmen to possess a regularly constituted ministry. We are content that their candidates for the sacred office should be ordained by one minister, though we would rather it should be by three or four. We ask but for a similar concession.

In this sermon of Dr. Wyatt, he is seen in so amiable a light, that we sympathize with him for having published it. It will do probably no good to his cause, and certainly none to his reputation. He appears in it (and except from this discourse we have no means of judging) to be a mild and conscientious man; and were it not, that we think it ought to be more considered than it is, that none but the well educated should undertake to guide the public mind on such subjects, we would not say, that we do not recollect to have seen a composition in such bad English, by an author who could affix to his name the insignia of a second degree in the arts. A sermon preached, deserves all indulgence. A controversial sermon printed, claims none.

The work of Mr. Sparks is the best which has appeared in this country, since the time of Chauncy, on the episcopal controversy. He had the advantage over Dr. Miller in not writing in Presbyterian fetters, and in possessing a learning, possibly not so various, (for he is a much younger man) but far better digested, more systematic, and accurate. The cause of letters owes much to this gentleman, and if it had not surrendered him to higher claims, would yet hope much more. In his removal, the University resigned a member on whose reputation and services it set a high value, and it was felt like the loss of a distinguished freeman to the literary republic of the east. Under his direction, the North American Re-

view made great progress towards that reputation, which has enabled it at last, (in conjunction with other publications to the same end,) to lower the tone of our trans-atlantic traducers, and to give itself no mean proof of the intellectual advances which it vindicates. From this flattering path to a wide reputation, and from the pursuit of favourite studies, he hesitated not to withdraw himself to the service of religion, and went with, to say the least, no elating prospects, to preach in a new field, the doctrines of uncorrupt Christianity. It is not therefore for the cause alone,—a little of personal feeling may excuseably have place,—that we are grateful for the issue of his exertions. Such has been their success, and the power and progress of just religious views, that in little more than a year since his ordination, the society is relieved from heavy pecuniary embarrassments; the odium which existed against it, has sensibly subsided; and it is now as respectable in point of numbers, as it is memorable for the stand it took in support of Christian liberty and truth. Unless we grossly miscalculate the impression which this work will produce, we shall think the exertions made to collect and establish that society, well requited by its having given rise to such a publication.

In his first letter, *on the ministry of the Episcopal church*, Mr. Sparks controverts the assumption, that “the Episcopal is the only true church; that its ministry originated with the apostles, and has descended down to the present time through an unbroken and divinely protected succession; and, that ordinations, performed by any other persons than bishops, are devoid of every degree of validity and efficacy in conferring spiritual office and power.” He appeals in the first place, to the scripture evidence, and concludes his examination with the following statement.

“*First*, our Saviour left no instructions in regard to the nature or form of the ministry; he never spoke of three orders, or any number of orders; he gave no directions about the ceremony of ordination, nor did he assign the duty of performing it to any particular class of men. *Secondly*, the apostles said nothing of any number of orders in the ministry, nor have they left any rules or instructions on the subject of ordination. *Thirdly*, the first church at Jerusalem was governed by the apostles, elders, and brethren in concert. The apostles assumed no authority above the elders, nor the elders above the people. *Fourthly*, it is no where said in the whole New Testament, that the duty of conferring ordination was confined to any particular order of the ministry; but on the contrary, several examples are on record, which go to prove, that this ceremony was performed by any officer or officers of regular standing in the church. *Fifthly*, Timothy and Titus are never called bishops. Timothy is expressly called an *evangelist*; and the duties of Titus were such, as are usually assigned to an evangelist. *Sixthly*, the persons who were appoint-

ed by the apostles to assist in providing for the poor, and whom you call the 'seven deacons,' are never designated by this name in the scriptures. Their office was wholly of a temporal nature, and therefore could make no part of the ministry. *Seventhly*, the word *deacon* seems to have been applied at first as a general term, for a servant in the cause of the gospel, a minister, or teacher; and if it was afterwards appropriated to any particular office, no mention is made in the writings of the apostles respecting the nature or design of such an office. No instance is recorded, in which deacons, as officers of an exclusive character, are said to have taken a part in the government or concerns of any church. *Lastly*, the same reasons, by which you establish three orders in the ministry, would prove the existence of at least six or seven, as apostles, bishops, prophets, evangelists, elders, teachers, deacons." pp. 24—26.

One would think this were enough for a Protestant. But Mr. Sparks is too fair a disputant, and moreover defends too impregnable ground, not to be willing to allow every advantage to his adversary. He accordingly defers to Episcopal "fondness for the ancient fathers," so far as to go into an examination of their testimony, of which he gives the following summary.

"I have thus gone through with a patient examination of the evidence, on which the episcopal church advances its singular pretensions to a divine origin and succession. In the scriptures I have found nothing, either in the commands of our Saviour, or of the apostles, which can justify any class of men in assuming to themselves the claim of being the only true church.

"A similar result has followed from the testimony of the Fathers, and the history of the English reformation. *First*, it can be indisputably proved from the Fathers, that the churches in the primitive ages were not uniformly governed by three orders of ministry; but frequently by two, and sometimes by one. *Secondly*, bishops were parochial clergymen, in many places at least, and nothing more. *Thirdly*, ordinations were performed by presbyters, especially in the case of Irenæus, and for a long time in the church at Alexandria. *Fourthly*, no particular account can be given of the origin of the church of Rome, or of its first seven bishops. *Fifthly*, the power of the English clergy is confessedly derived from the king, and not from any church. *Sixthly*, the informality of ordination in the English church was such, in the opinion of the Catholics, who are supposed to constitute the true church, as to destroy all power, that might be transmitted by the episcopal succession. *Seventhly*, English bishops were at an early period consecrated by presbyters, and at a much later period, ordination by presbyters was considered valid. *Finally*, the consecration of archbishop Parker, who was the beginning of the succession since his time both to English and American bishops, was declared, and is still considered by the Catholics, invalid, and was at best of a very suspicious and doubtful character." pp. 45, 46.

We see not, how the arguments in this letter can fail to appear to any impartial person, decisive of the question. For our own parts, until some important error in them is pointed out,—which we apprehend cannot be,—we shall be quite content to have our ordination as regular as that of Barnabas and Paul, who were ordained by “certain prophets and teachers at Antioch.”*

It seems to us, that there are not many things in church history which less admit of dispute, than the rise and establishment of episcopacy. The New Testament gives no hint of such a division of orders in the priesthood, that every person who assumes it must enter it either in a superior or subordinate capacity, nor does there any where appear to have been any other distinction among the early preachers of the faith, except what grew out of peculiar gifts, or out of circumstances, implying a peculiar fitness, and therefore authority, to teach, such as having been the immediate associate of our Lord or his apostles. The early preachers of our faith adopted the course which men of good sense, not to say men divinely inspired, might be expected to adopt. Wherever they formed a society of christians, they would naturally retain the instruction of the flock they had gathered, or if they left it, in pursuance of their commission to preach the gospel to all nations, their opinion would naturally be regarded in the selection of the person who should have charge of it, and the imposition of their hands with prayer, would seem an appropriate and solemn way of separating him to his office. As the number of christians in a place increased, convenience would demand the forming of new societies, and the head of the parent congregation might be expected to induct a new teacher, with formalities similar to those with which the first messenger introduced him. So far all would be obviously rational, and no more than we might expect would take place. But the idea that after the age of miracles, any, by right of being successors to the apostles in the highest order of the priesthood, could convey an authority resting solely with them to confer, is an invention of later times. It is not difficult to see how it originated, for it is

* We suggest to Mr. Sparks an argument, on which, in another edition, it might be well to enlarge. The authority to which the English church pretends, it claims to have received from the Romish. Now the power which makes, can unmake, and unless we mistake, the whole English hierarchy is yearly declared by the pope excommunicate. At any rate the consecration of archbishop Parker, to whom the English line is traced, was formally declared to be irregular and invalid. The arguments, therefore, by which the English clergy seek to prove that authority in the Romish church to which they refer their own, these self-same arguments, if they have any weight, prove the English clergy to be no priests, disowned as they are by the very power by which they claim to have been created.

no secret how early worldly passions began to nestle in the bosom of the church.* As congregations multiplied in a neighbourhood, the first who had brought the faith into it, or the first who had exercised a stated ministry, came to be regarded with a peculiar respect. Greater age, or superior rank, learning, or virtue, would elevate others above their associates; and humble as most of the early christians were, and difficult and dangerous as was the situation of all, distinction would be a demand for severer duty on one side, and the necessity of protection would lead to cheerful submission on the other. They who assumed the post of danger, claimed for their reward, or for the benefit of the rest, from selfishness, or from the apparent necessity of the case, that it should be also the post of dignity and rule; and while as yet distinction only gave a better chance of martyrdom, when there was no pomp to attract the ambitious, nor patronage to excite the worldly, there was no reason for contesting the claim, and whether formally or tacitly, it was readily allowed. When the church formed an alliance with the state, another condition of things succeeded. The gradations which the universal temporary expediency had created, were for private advantage made permanent, and defended as such on the ground of right; and what had been but precedence in duty, trust, and danger, came to be claimed as superiority of office. Till a comparatively late period, however, the Romish, the most powerful church, can alone be considered as properly episcopal. The government of the Alexandrian approached near to the presbyterian form, and that of the church of Carthage to the congregational. Considering how early the christians became an important, though still an oppressed body, and how deeply-rooted and all-embracing a passion is the love of power, we are only surprised, that a system like the episcopal was not earlier organized. From that period, the history of episcopacy, is the history of Romish usurpation.†

* "I wrote unto the church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, received us not." III John, v. 9.

† Doddridge's sensible and candid account of the rise and establishment of episcopacy may be seen, vol. ii. p. 352 of his Lectures. That of Jerome about the beginning of the 5th century, is this; "Till through the instinct of the devil there grew in the church factions, and among the people it began to be professed, I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas, churches were governed by the common advice of presbyters; but when every one began to reckon those whom himself had baptized, his own, and not Christ's, it was decreed in the whole world, that one, chosen out of the presbyters, should be placed over the rest, to whom all care of the church should belong, and so the seeds of schism be removed." To explain this simple historical statement in accordance with his own views, the bishop

We shall be asked how an institution, so pregnant with danger to the liberty of christians, was able, unless founded on scriptural authority, to survive the protestant reformation. The question is easily solved. The work of the reformation was of a magnitude and difficulty, of which at this period we are hardly able to form a tolerably just conception. Nothing less was to be done than to overturn the most dearly cherished prejudices of men, on a subject, which the sense of ages had declared it sacrilege to scrutinize. It was not to be expected that the *first* inquiries, bold as they were, should reach the conclusions of the *last*; that the first struggles of minds trained into deformity and feebleness by the worse than Chinese distortions of a Romish discipline, should show the vigour of a healthy growth. Rear an infant in manacles, he will be a cripple, though he be freed from them, when he becomes a man. There were abuses of more pressing enormity than this, which claimed the first attention of an awakened age. The papal was so galling a yoke, that the weight of the episcopal was scarcely felt; and bad as were the simoniacal practices of the time, they were not to be thought of, till a more crying sin, the sale of indulgences, was stifled. We ought not to be surprised (if it were only on this ground) that the pretensions of the episcopate were no earlier contested. But further; the best reformers, and those who saw this subject in its true light, were wise men; wise enough to know that the whole is often best secured by claiming at first only a part, and one design effected, and another put in a happy train by forbearance, when impatience would frustrate both. They did not care to expose such an enterprise as theirs to ill-timed risque, by disgusting any of its adherents, who, in the case of an amalgamation of orders, would lose the rank and revenues of princes. They did not forget, that in the gowned hosts

of Lincoln, (*Elements of Theology*, ii. 391,) employs the very hypothesis which the statement is made to discountenance. He argues that Jerome must have spoken in this passage of apostolic times, "because in another part of the same work he tells us, that James was made bishop of Jerusalem by the apostles, Timothy bishop of Ephesus, and Titus bishop of Crete, by St. Paul, and Polycarp bishop of Smyrna by St. John." If Jerome spoke here, as he is represented to have spoken, of diocesan and not parochial bishops, what churches in Ephesus and Crete, we would gladly learn, were those, which, before Timothy and Titus were sent to them, were "governed by the common advice of presbyters?" and in what part of the Acts of the Apostles is an account, or in what part of the epistles a hint, given of the passing of that decree, according to which this writer would have it, that Timothy and Titus were made diocesan bishops; passed as his hypothesis supposes it to have been, within the period to which the New Testament history relates. Were scripture, and all antiquity beside, silent on the subject, the writings of Jerome alone would prove the episcopal government to be an usurpation.

of Rome, they had aggressors, with whom such an organization as that of the hierarchy would enable them the better to contend; and as prudent men are wont to do in seasons of alarm, they resigned a portion of their rightful privileges to buy security for the rest. Perhaps some might even fear that the zeal for change would grow with the multitude as it was gratified, and so might prefer rather to endure some of what seemed to them the more tolerable abuses, than take the hazard of indulging a spirit which it might be difficult to check.

This would be explanation sufficient, if only pious and learned men had had the direction in those measures, which, taken altogether, are called the reformation in England. But we are not to forget that many were concerned in them, of whom learning is little predicable, and piety still less. Episcopacy, acquiesced in for a time by one description of men for reasons of expediency, was protected by another for reasons of state. The chief excellence which Henry VIII. saw in the opposition to the supremacy of the pope, was its transferring that supremacy from the pope to himself, and monopolizing as he was, it would have little met his views to resign the power of giving away mitres, palaces, and stalls. Queen Elizabeth, it is well known, reproached herself for having given so much aid to the reformation;* and her pedant cousin, though he had declared to his Scottish parliament, that "he minded not to bring in Papistical or Anglicane bishops," had learned five years after, at the conference at Hampton court, to utter with the positiveness of an oracle, and the emphasis of a monarch, the maxim, *no bishop, no king*. This maxim uttered by the source of all law, it was no safe thing, in touching the lawn, virtually to assail the crown; and willing as the reformers might be to be martyrs, it was less creditable at least to go to the gallows for high treason, than to the stake for denying the real presence. Thus the episcopal power rested too firmly on the civil for plebeian hands to raze it. It still stands on the foundation of the lords and commons of England,

* Neal says (Hist. of Puritans, i. 192.) that except by the English language, the service in her chapel could not be distinguished from the popish. One of her chaplains on Good Friday spoke in favour of the real presence, and she openly gave him thanks for his pains and piety. The dean of St. Pauls, in a sermon at court, spoke with dislike of the sign of the cross, and she bid him desist from that ungodly digression, and return to his text. (Do. i. 206.) She "loved magnificence in religion," says Burnet "as she affected it in all other things. This made her inclined to keep images still in churches, and that the Popish party might be offended as little as was possible, she intended to have the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament defined in general terms, that might comprehend all sides." (Hist. Reform. Abr. p. 534.)

queen Elizabeth and lord chancellor Hyde being the chief corner stones.

These things considered, it is really matter of surprise that just views of this abuse were so early entertained, and to such extent; and that so considerable efforts were made to correct it. That first and most illustrious reformer Wickliffe, denied the distinction of priest and bishop. "One thing," says he, "I boldly assert, that in the primitive church, two orders of clergy were thought sufficient, viz. priest and deacon; and I do also say that in the time of Paul, a priest and a bishop were one and the same; for in those times the distinct orders of pope, cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, officials, and deans were not invented." To the 10th of the questions proposed by Henry VIII. to his prelates, *whether bishops or priests were first*, the archbishop of Canterbury replies; "the bishops and priests were at one time and were no two things; but both one office in the beginning of Christ's religion;" and others of his coadjutors agree with him in sense. The king's book* declares "of these two orders only, that is to say, priests and deacons, scripture maketh express mention, and how they were conferred by the apostles by prayer and imposition of hands." The pretension to a divine right of episcopacy seems indeed to have been first started in England by Dr. Bancroft, in 1588. The doctrine was then so new even to high churchmen, that Whitgift,† than whom no man was more tenacious of church authority, said he rather wished than believed it to be true. Archbishop Usher, bishop Burnet, and indeed most of the more learned and moderate reformers, from the beginning of the reformation till the final check was put to it under Charles II. either denied or doubted the distinction between the orders of bishop and priest. What is very remarkable is, that in the very articles of that church, which now asserts this distinction of orders to be so vital to its constitution, this distinction is entirely overlooked in that part‡ which treats of the

* This book was published in 1543, and was entitled; "A necessary erudition for a christian man." It was drawn up by a committee of bishops and divines, and was afterwards read and approved by the lords spiritual and temporal, and the lower house of parliament, and corrected by the king's own hand. (Neal's Hist. i. 79.)

† Says Whitgift, as quoted by How against Miller, p. 46; "There is no certain form of church government or discipline prescribed to the church, but the same may be altered as the profit of the churches requires. I do deny that the scriptures do set down any one certain kind of government in the church to be perpetual for all times, places and persons, without alteration."

‡ The article, Art. 23d, runs thus; "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments

institution of ministers to their office, so doubtful a thing was the permanency of the existing organization thought to be. The divine right, (said Mr. Henderson in 1646, to the king, in the name of the clergy of Britain) "was not pleaded till of late by some few;" and in that year the hierarchy was abolished by act of parliament, the same authority by which it is now upheld. The christian liberty, thus recovered for a little season in England, had amidst the deluge of Romish impiety, been preserved, as in an ark, in the vallies of Piedmont, by a faithful sect, the Waldenses, who from the time of pope Sylvester, A. D. 316, at the latest, are known as a distinct community, and perhaps existed as such from the time of the apostles. It may appear from what we have stated, how singularly inaccurate is the assertion of Dr. Wyatt, in the sense which he attaches to the words *authorized ministry*, that "through the darkest days of the christian church, while so many other tenets became perverted or disguised, few ventured to assail, and none succeeded in setting aside, the authorized ministry of the church of Christ."

But another question will occur. Granting, it will be said, with the best of the early reformers, with the most judicious writers of later times in the English communion, such, for example, as King,* Chillingworth, Hoadly, Hammond, Paley,† Prettyman and Locke, and (as we suppose we may be permitted to say) with the mass of churchmen in this country, that episcopacy is not a divine institution, why should we not also agree with them, that it ought to be acquiesced in and vindicated as

in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

Such a studied indistinctness on a matter of such moment speaks for itself. How it appeared to one qualified in every respect to judge, may be inferred from the remark of Burnet, as quoted by Tomline, ii. 379, "They left this matter open and at large for such accidents as have happened, and such as might still happen."

* By some inadvertency the inquiry into the constitution of the primitive church is ascribed in Mr. Sparks's work to archbishop King. The author was the *chancellor*, Sir Peter King.

† Paley reasons in favour of episcopacy, that it promotes good order, affords to men of all ranks religious instructors on a level with themselves, gives respectability to the priesthood, and offers prizes to exertion. He calls the gradations of clerical rank "rules of the society, rather than laws of the religion," and declares that "christianity may be professed under any form of church government."

conducive to religious order?*. This question deserves a fair consideration; for whatever form of church polity will best protect and give efficacy to religious institutions, has a claim to the preference and support of christians.

Admitting, for the sake of the argument, that the system of ecclesiastical polity existing in the church of England, is of the wisest contrivance, there are other considerations to be attended to, before any one can attach himself to its communion. It is not recommendation sufficient to a society, that its government is so constructed as to be powerful, unless the laws are also good and well administered; and let a man be ever so well satisfied, that the structure of a church government is such as to make it efficient, it still remains for his consideration, whether this is not overbalanced by its being oppressively exercised. If tests contrary to liberty of conscience are imposed, if assent to false articles of faith is exacted, or even if the authorized form of worship involves doctrines disbelieved or disputed, if it tends to superstition, or does not tend in the highest degree to edification, the government strong enough to protect such abuses is only the more to be avoided and condemned. To him who believes that it makes undue claims, it is a despotism; and he is bound none the less to seek his christian liberty, because he admires the organization which oppresses him. Whether any such objection lies against the English church will be seen from our remarks on its articles and ritual.

We do not doubt that the episcopal form of polity is well adapted to maintain itself. It is well arranged and balanced to enlist and direct many strong human feelings; and we entered fully into the sentiment of an episcopal friend, who once expressed to us his admiration of a mechanism, which could work to such effect, when there was so little ability to direct its movements. But the true question is, is it strong to do right, and weak to do wrong. We grant that it makes dissent from certain obscure doctrines inconvenient, and dissatisfaction with certain arbitrary forms vexatious; but we believe we shall say without contradiction, that in no other denomination of christians is discipline in so low a state. We do not allude to such abuses as the absence of a large proportion of the clergy from their cures in England, where the same place is one of great hardship to him who does the duty, and in reality a sinecure to him who receives the emo-

* An argument which may seem scarcely to correspond to the dignity of the subject, is used by Hey on Art. 23d. "If ministers be self ordained,—how can it be brought about that certain appearances, modes of dress and behaviour, shall be so associated with piety and virtue, as instantly to produce good feelings in the mind."

luments, because it is not perhaps the ecclesiastical system, but the characters of the bishops which are answerable for this, and in our country we know nothing to the contrary of the episcopal superintendence being impartially and vigilantly exercised. But we speak of evils belonging to the system. It is with these only we have to do; for in this country, in many instances we are sure, and in most we believe, the affairs of the church are conducted by conscientious men. We speak of the control over communicants, the only spiritual authority which is now exercised. To take the lowest ground, it is certainly the right of the members of a christian church to protect its reputation, and to guard against scandal by refusing to any, but persons of good lives and conversation, a participation *with them* of christian ordinances. But instead of a good life and conversation, the condition of sharing in the most sacred act of christian fellowship, set forth in the formularies of a sect, which defines the church to be "a congregation of faithful persons," is the ability "to repeat the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and to answer to such other questions as in the short catechism are contained." A candidate who can stand this ordeal has a right to confirmation by the bishop, and the priest is liable to excommunication, if after this he refuse him the elements. In England an excommunicated person has an appeal to the chancellor, who is often a layman, and the decision of this officer is not subject to the review of the bishop. We need not say that we are not over much attached to narrow conditions of admission to christian privileges. But if there are to be any, let them be grounded on some evidence of desire to live a christian life, and not on the passport of a person who never saw the candidate, till he came to kneel under episcopal hands, and in all probability will never see him again.

Passing over many other objections which might be made, we cannot persuade ourselves that such a system is calculated to operate favourably on the character of the clergy. The highest order of them is placed in a situation of such influence and distinction, as to call no doubt for uncommon discipline of mind, to preserve that humility which becomes the servants of a meek and lowly Saviour. We doubt not (we say this in perfect sincerity) we doubt not, all precautions are taken against this tendency of the circumstances in which they find themselves placed. But agreeing with us, as all christian ministers must, that the prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation,' is a prayer which becomes a christian, they will join us in lamenting the danger, though it

may appear to them overbalanced by other advantages.* Much of what belongs to the government of a diocese is moreover almost secular, so much so as to go very far towards justifying the English practice, which almost drops the character of the minister in the bishop. To the usefulness of the priest the system is no more propitious. He is under the same disadvantage with every other man who has a superior responsible for his conduct. If he is blamed, or blames himself for his remissness, he does not forget that the bishop as well as himself must answer for it, and by the division of the responsibility, the power of conscience is weakened. The officiating clergy are partially at least relieved of dependence on those to whom their mal-administration is a wrong. If accused they must answer to one, whom, faithful as he may be to his trust, they may, if they have sufficient resources and address, find some other means to satisfy of their innocence, besides proving it, or whom at least they may influence in their favour by repelling specific accusations, when he has not the opportunity of frequent intercourse to learn how they fulfil those less determinate duties, by which the faithful or negligent discharge of an office is best made known. A bishopric in prospect is no aid to the usefulness of a priest. The acknowledged and official head of such a body as the clergy is necessarily a man of great consequence and power. The influence of one among the American bishops, we suppose, is not inferior to that of more than one other man in the United States. Such a situation cannot but be an object of desire to those who are in a condition to be raised to it; and to say nothing of the advantage both to shepherd and flock of the connexion between them being understood to be permanent, nor of the danger of sinking the clerical character in canvassing for preferment, in soliciting the powerful, making partisans of the low, and plotting against rivals,—we are not satisfied that any ambition, except that to discharge regularly laborious and responsible duties, can well have place in the mind of one engaged in the christian ministry. Once more; the same man will not make the best bishop and the best priest; and we should think this must be an injury to all in the subordinate rank, hoping, as it is at least possible all may, to be raised to the higher. We should fear, that in qualifying themselves for the office to which they are aspiring, they might regard less the qualifications

* If a churchman and a bishop is to be credited, this apprehension sometimes is realized. "I saw the generality of the bishops bartering their independence and the dignity of their order for the chance of a translation, and polluting gospel humility by the pride of prelacy." *Watson's life*, p. 62.

for the place they fill ; that present usefulness might suffer by the chance of promotion.

But we need not enlarge on this subject, for if the system of episcopacy continues to subsist at all, it will be only by the credit which it may gain to its pretensions to a divine right. Good as it might be reckoned, it would soon be obsolete, if it attempted to exercise authority where it was considered as only a prudential institution. The first man who thought himself wronged by those in place under it, would secede. The first imagined abridgment of the christian liberty of an individual would create a schism, for no man would submit to what he thought an unjust exercise of an usurped authority. Those who maintain the expediency of this form of government, must, whatever they may think,—if they mean it shall continue,—must, if their consciences will suffer them, maintain its *jure divino* claim. It will stand on no narrower base ; and when Locke and Paley sought to remove it to another, we are almost tempted to believe, that, friends to religious liberty as they were, they meant to take a step to demolish it, and chose the way which was at once the surest, and the least obnoxious, to accomplish their purpose.

Mr. Sparks' second letter is on *the ritual of the episcopal church*. He speaks of the use of forms of prayer in the following judicious and candid terms.

“Your remarks on the utility and expediency of forms of prayer are not without weight. If we ever give utterance to our feelings in chaste, appropriate, and solemn language, it should be in our addresses to the Deity. If we ever suppress the vain ambition of using lofty phrases, high sounding epithets, and an unnecessary abundance of words, it should be then. We cannot study too much to make our language simple, plain, forcible and direct. In those religious exercises in which large numbers unite, and where the prayers are intended to express the wants and petitions of the whole, there can certainly be no impropriety in using a preconceived form, composed in such general terms as to be adapted to a promiscuous assembly.”

It is not pretended that the use of set forms of prayer is required in scripture, as essential to the fit performance of that duty ; nor can those who approve forms, take in defence of them that favourite ground of antiquity, where ignorant and worldly ecclesiastics of the fourth and fifth centuries may be called in for allies. “Men had prayed to God,” as Palmer remarks, “two thousand years before any books were written ;” and extemporaneous prayer was habitually offered in the assemblies of the primitive christians. “They prayed,” says Tertullian, “without any prompter except their own hearts.” “The president,”

says Justin Martyr, "prayed according to his ability." Nor until the council of Milan, in the year 416, were forms authoritatively appointed by the church.

On the other hand, the lawfulness of the use of set forms is not denied, for those, who find them to conduce to the purposes of social worship. We need not therefore stop to consider what Dr. Wyatt could have meant by the words "the lawfulness of forms being then established *by a divine appointment*," any more than to ask how his remark, that "the book of Psalms was inspired by the Holy Ghost *for the use of the congregation*," is to be reconciled with the fact, (undisputed, as we have supposed, till now,) that many of the Psalms were composed on subjects of a personal nature; and suited as they are to excite devout sentiments, are, from their structure, as entirely unsuitable as one of the discourses of our Lord, or one of the epistles would be, to make a part in the devotions of an assembly of worshippers.

We are not aware of any prejudice on this subject, nor do we even regard it as of the first importance. We wish, as all christians must, that prayer should be offered in that manner, in which the purposes of devotion will be best accomplished. It is a thing of minor concern whether our petitions be offered in the words of others or our own; the object is that they be offered in the most solemn, reverend, and edifying manner. We are not blind to the advantages or defects of either of the different methods adopted in christian congregations; but after as fair an estimate as we are able to make of them, we cannot but regard prayers in a certain sense extemporaneous, as best fitted to accomplish the ends of public worship. They require in the clergy a useful discipline of heart and mind, a familiarity with scripture and with devotional thoughts. They require a peculiar culture of the affections, and at the time of offering them give an animation to the devout feelings, which tends much to the improvement, alike of the intellectual and religious character of the clergy, and by direct consequence of their power of usefulness. No doubt, that, except under circumstances of peculiar embarrassment, or except prevented by a constitutional diffidence, or want of fluency seldom found, the same person, after a proper course of preparation, may utter a more appropriate and fervent prayer in the church, than he can compose in the closet; because in retirement he is only preparing it to be offered, and it will almost unavoidably be marked by a rhetorical coldness; in the church he is really offering it, and under circumstances which can hardly fail, except under disadvantages such as have been named, to work up a mind of sensibility to a high pitch of devotional feeling. He is operated on by the associations of place, and by a sense of the solemnity

ty and interest of the occasion. His mind is awed by the unbroken silence, and at the same time led into the proper train and forced into strong action, by the presence of a multitude, whose devotions he is to present. He is at liberty to adapt his thanksgiving and petitions to the circumstances of those whose devotions he leads, and we suppose no one doubts, that our devotional feelings are most engaged by those prayers, which have the closest reference to our own condition. And to these reasons for preference of the congregational form of conducting public worship, which we conceive give the promise, that the prayers offered in christian assemblies will be in this way the best constructed for their purpose, we add, that the degree of variety of expression and of topics, which this method admits, is of use to excite and keep alive the devout feelings of the worshippers.

We are not insensible, however, to an inconvenience attending this method. It requires in the person who officiates, abilities and cultivation which may be dispensed with in him, who is only needed, to use the phrase of Dr. Mayhew, "to read prayers to God." And even the best qualified for the sacred office, are, at times, from languor of spirits and temporary decay of their powers, or from accidental embarrassment, from which a public assembly is no place to recover, in danger of paining their fellow-worshippers by a want of fluency or propriety in their addresses. We have no hesitation in admitting this difficulty to be real. But we have never seen or heard it stated except in what seem to us exaggerated terms. We have not found it to exist to any very serious extent. A man learns to pray as he learns to preach; and if he have considerable acquaintance with scripture, and right views of the nature of the service, we think he will be more likely, with the same talents and discipline, to offer the prayers of a christian assembly in a suitable manner, than to interest and profit them by his preaching. And if by chance, a moment's hesitation should occur, or an expression not the aptest possible escape him, it is not an occasion to call forth a captious criticism; or the taste, if offended, may look for its compensation to a moment of greater collectedness, and more raised devotional feeling. The inconvenience, we are satisfied, has been not so much experienced, as feared; and thus it has had the effect, which all christians must rejoice in, to draw the attention of christian societies to the gifts and piety of their clergy, and, in a considerable degree, to bar the places of public instruction against men of incompetent attainments or doubtful character.

This objection to extemporaneous prayer, as (inaccurately, we suppose, in general) it is called, is the only one to which we attach any sort of weight. We have heard it said, that it is hard

to follow a prayer which one hears for the first time, and confusing to have to consider before one adopts it for his own, whether it expresses his feelings, and is suitable for his use. We suspect the evil is nearly imaginary. The topics of prayer are from its nature limited; and ought to be, and to a great degree are, familiar. Every person has forms of expression, which in some degree belong to him, and are a guide to his meaning before the whole is uttered. Nor is every prayer offered in the church wholly different from all others. He who should seek to diversify his expressions to this extent, would be setting himself a task, painful to himself, and unprofitable to his people. And even at the worst, it is no very painful thing to keep the mind in suspense till the longest period, commonly used in prayer, is finished. But we may further reply, that the inconvenience, if it exist, furnishes no ground of preference for a form prescribed. For if it be hard to follow a prayer which one is using for the first time, it is next to impossible to follow a prayer which one has used times innumerable. Familiarity lulls attention to sleep; and if it can be roused, it is only by an effort which wholly engages the mind, and forbids it to be excited by the feelings which the occasion, unless such a narcotic were provided, would infallibly create. It is one of the good effects, we apprehend, of the assembling of christians together, that it invigorates and gives earnestness to the feelings of piety in all. And this ought to cause the common worship to be offered in a strain of warmer devotion. But a prescribed form of prayer forbids this. It can have little indulgence for the course into which circumstances may lead the thoughts and feelings of the worshippers. It offers them only the alternative of stepping aside from the train of their reflections, to repeat, with such interest as they are able to force, a form of words which, from use, has lost its power to excite,—or of indulging apart from the assembly, devout emotions of their own, which, if the tyrannical service did not forbid, would be kindled and confirmed by being expressed in prayer.

But we do not defend extemporaneous prayer. Without doubt, we would have a person who assumes the sacred office, made capable, by previous discipline, of offering a suitable thanksgiving or request in the name of other christians, for the blessings which any moment may unexpectedly bring or call for.* But on stated occasions we would not have him undertake to lead the public devotions, without much and serious preparation. We

* The episcopal historian of the presbyterians of England and Scotland in Charles II.'s time agrees to this: "Il y a quelques ministres capables qui sans le formulaire ordinaire font des prières pleines d'édification, et a cela tout ministre de l'évangile doit être préparé." Edit. 2d. p. 134.

would have him, before he ventures on so solemn an office, converse in solitude with religious thoughts ; summon into his heart and mind every holy feeling, every grand and engaging conception of God, every inextinguishable "longing after immortality ;" and work up his whole soul for the noblest act in which the soul of man engages. But when he has turned his thoughts and feelings into the proper channel, let him not dyke them in, and force them to stagnate there, but rather bid them roll on, and trust that mingling with the heart-offering of others, they will flow in a yet fuller tide. In this state of mind it is not probable that his fellow-worshippers will be tasked to understand his meaning, or embarrassed to decide whether it is applicable to themselves. Almost the least instructed man may be nearly sure in the utterance of deeply-felt devout emotions, to carry the sympathy of others with him. This state of feeling, he will find the warm and powerful language of scripture best fitted to express. And by the frequent use of scripture language, which is copious enough for almost any occasion which can occur, not only will the inconvenience named be guarded against,—for most who attend public worship are familiar enough with scripture to know when a sentence is begun what will follow,—but the great object is attained of having a worship in which all christians, whatever be their diversities of belief, can join ; for interpret it as variously as they may, all allow the authority of scripture, and whatever is its language, they with full assent are willing to make the language of their prayers.

We have heard it as often as it is idly said, that in the congregational service the people can with no more propriety be said to pray, than they can be said to preach. If there is good sense in this, then public worship can only be properly conducted by the whole congregation speaking aloud, at once ; then instead of offering prayers, as it has been commonly supposed to do, for various important blessings, through a considerable part of the Litany, the congregation does nothing but repeat, some fifteen or twenty times, "we beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ;" and then, a great part of the English form might as well not deface the white paper of the service-book, for the prayers in it, with the single exception (as we believe) of the Lord's prayer, are repeated by the priest alone, and are only appropriated by the congregation to themselves by an expression of assent at the close.

We prefer then free prayer to the use of prescribed forms, because we do not see that the former is liable to any important objection, while the latter relieve the clergy of an useful task, are not capable of being accommodated so closely to circumstances as might be wished, and tend to deaden the spirit of de-

votion. We feel strongly with Dr. Wyatt, that "we have a sacred privilege and an awful duty, when we approach the throne of Jehovah; every thing therefore, which can tend to promote the most profound veneration, the most undivided attention, and the purest devotion, should be strictly adhered to;" and it is because we think thus, that we differ from him on the subject of a form. Other things being equal, we do not doubt that the best prayer will be that which is not composed till it is uttered; that he will most fitly offer the devotions of others, who is at the moment offering his own. It is when engaged in that service, that the sense of God's greatness, of our own unworthiness and dependence, is most powerfully felt. The mind is crowded with appropriate thoughts,—awed, elevated, and warmed at once,—and all those feelings called into strong exercise, which make up the spirit of prayer.* If the persons employed in the ministry are capable of being affected by such emotions, we would have them permitted to express such;† and we do believe that men who are able to preach, are

* Bishop Hall's expressions in correspondence with these views, used in controversy with Calamy and others in 1640, shew him to have been little acquainted with the views of men in power, or to have had little sympathy with them. "Far be it from me to dishearten any good christian from the use of conceived prayer in his private devotions, and upon occasion also in the public. I would hate to be guilty of pouring so much water upon the spirit, to which I would gladly add oil rather. No, let the full soul freely pour out itself in gracious expressions of its holy thoughts into the bosom of the Almighty; let both the sudden flashes of our quick ejaculations, and the constant flames of our more fixed conceptions, mount up from the altar of a zealous heart unto the throne of grace; and if there be some stops or solecisms in the fervent utterance of our private wants, these are so far from being offensive, that they are the most pleasing music to the ears of that God unto whom our prayers come.—What I have professed concerning conceived prayers is that which I have ever allowed, ever practised, both in *private and public*. God is a free spirit, and so should ours be, in pouring out our voluntary devotions upon *all occasions*. Nothing hinders but that this liberty and a public liturgy should be good friends, and go hand in hand together; and whosoever would forcibly separate them, let them bear their own blame—the over rigorous pressing of the liturgy, to the justling out of preaching or *conceived prayers*, was never intended by the law makers, or moderate governors of the church."

† We are at a loss for the meaning of the framers of the liturgy, when in the office of institution they require the newly inducted minister to pray, "be ever with me in the performance of the duties of my ministry; in prayer to quicken my devotion, in praises to heighten my love and gratitude." On personal accounts, quickened devotion and heightened love and gratitude are fit objects of prayer to a christian minister, as well as to other christians, but they do nothing to assist him "in the performance of the duties of his ministry," which are named; for be his devotions ever so quickened or so dead, his love and gratitude ever so lively or so languid, the same form of *prayer and praises* must perforce be used.

able to pray. At the same time we do not forget, that for the want of interest and appropriateness in preconceived prayers, there is some compensation in their admitting of being cleared from any thing offensive or irrelevant; and where special precautions on this score are thought necessary, we would certainly have them used. We think that in the time of Edward VI., when a very small proportion of the clergy were fit to be trusted with the public worship or instruction, the better part did well to provide a book of homilies for them to preach from, and a service book for them to pray by, and wherever the same need is thought to exist, we hope that similar provision will be made to meet it.

We have stated our objections to forms in general. But we have yet graver charges against the episcopal book of common prayer. We object to it that,

I. It is a perpetual form. Men, all of whom have been in their graves more than an hundred, and some more than a thousand years, dictate the addresses of episcopalians at the throne of grace.* Since their time the habits of thinking and of expression are considerably changed,—and why, when on other occasions we are able to speak our own language, why confine us in this to the words of others, when if left to ourselves, we might fix on thoughts more interesting to us, or apprehend the same thoughts in a somewhat different shape or order, and clothe them in a somewhat different phraseology? It would only be more unreasonable to require us to transact our common affairs in the dialect of Chaucer. Doubtless the chief blessings, which we have to acknowledge or ask, are the same in all ages of the church; but it is as certain, that it is the acknowledgment of distinguishing blessings, which gives the greatest life to devotion. Common air is more worth than the greatest worldly success; but for which of these is one likely to express the liveliest gratitude? It is nature to be more thankful for a favour which has a personal and appropriate value. The form of words, which is suitable alike for our use, and for that of men who lived from the fourth century to the seventeenth, has no special fitness for the use of either. To stand on common ground, we must leave that personal ground where the most fervent devotions would be offered.

Again; with the progress of scriptural knowledge, the sentiments entertained with regard to some points involved in the episcopal formularies, have experienced change. The mass of

* Occasional prayers are sometimes composed, but the substance of the book remains inviolably the same. *Permanet, et remanebit in omne immobilis ævum.*

episcopalians of the present day dissent in some particulars (unimportant they will say) from the sentiments of the authors and compilers of their service-book; and are compelled in the use of it to attach some new meaning to plain words, or abstract their attention from the public worship, where certain odious passages occur,—practising in either case a mental reservation, painful to themselves, and capable of being misconceived by others. On the other hand, to just the extent that they reverence the form in which they worship, they are tempted to profess or adopt a belief in some respects unscriptural; and piety, by this deplorable arrangement, is made to turn traitor to truth.

Nor is this all. The volume with which our earliest religious recollections are associated, and which we are told has guided the devotions of generations before us, is very apt to take a place in the mind which is due to holy scripture alone. Our admirable liturgy,—as the phrase is in episcopal pulpits,—is very apt to be as much venerated, and as confidently appealed to as the Bible, even by some by whom it is as little read; and we have heard it spoken of, in and out of church, in terms, which seem to us little applicable to any other book than that of inspiration. So great has been the influence of the feeling of which we speak, that the ritual which Blackstone* declared to have been preserved in the sixteenth century principally by the terror of penal laws, was pronounced by Paley in the eighteenth, to have such an authority, that only by the most spirited measures could necessary alterations be expected to be forced into it.† Nay, the word of God is by many not thought fit to go abroad without the book of common prayer by its side. Propose in some places, where the church is in power, to send but a few Bibles to the east

* Of the law, 1 Eliz. c. 2. enacting, that if any person whatsoever shall—speak any thing in derogation, depraving, or despising of the book of common prayer, he shall forfeit—for the third offence all his goods and chattels, and suffer imprisonment for life, Blackstone says, (Comm. vol. iv. p. 51.) “These penalties were framed in the infancy of our present establishment, when the disciples of Rome and Geneva united in inveighing with the utmost bitterness against the English liturgy; and the terror of these laws proved a principal means, under providence, of preserving the purity as well as decency of our national worship.”

† “As the man who attacks a flourishing establishment writes with a halter round his neck, few ever will be found to attempt alterations, but men of more spirit than prudence, of more sincerity than caution, of warm, eager and impetuous tempers; consequently if we are to wait for improvement till the cool, the calm, the discreet part of mankind begin it, till church governors solicit, or ministers of state propose it,—I will venture to pronounce that (without His interposition with whom nothing is impossible) we shall remain as we are till the ‘renovation of all things.’”

or west, and the cry, *ecclesia in periculo!* is up. The scriptures and the service-book are brought out tied together,* and like the customers of the speculator in the story who dealt in commodities of various worth, the hungry for religious instruction must take both or neither.†

II. The English form of worship is substantially *one* form. Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, fast-days, feast-days, and saint-days, the whole year long and every year, it is almost all the same. 'Through all the changing scenes of life,' it plods resolutely on *the even tenor of its way*. Come a famine, an earthquake or a war; be a church in the garment of praise, or in the spirit of heaviness; let a pestilence depopulate a land, a fire lay a city in ashes, an insurrection threaten a state, or a despaired of victory preserve it,—when you would expect to hear only one loud burst of praise, or thrilling cry for mercy, the inflexible prayer-book claims all its due. The enthusiasm of the worshipper must be content to be checked in mid flight, while the minister begins at the beginning, and reads to the end, and then submit to vent itself in some preconstructed prayer (called appropriate) consisting of a score of lines. The whole round of every day topics must needs be gone regularly through, and only a corner left for the overwhelming calamity or the transporting success. Now all will admit, that the same sermon, preached thus often, with only a sentence or two varied to suit the time, would soon fail to sustain attention. Is there not equal cause to fear, that the same form of words, so often repeated in prayer, will unavoidably come to fall from the lips, and on the ear, without an answer at the heart? It is no reply to this to say, that the topics of prayer are things of permanent interest; for is not this the case too, we would ask, with the materials of pulpit discourse? Ought not a sermon to be made up of thoughts of

* The reference is to the part taken by bishop Marsh, and the high church party in England, with regard to the Bible Society. The sentiments advanced by them, have not wanted distinguished advocates in this country.

An account of the English controversy may be found in the *Eclectic Review*, vol. 8. pp. 1209, et seq. and in the *Christian Observer*, vol. 11, pp. 173. 289. 392, et seq. Dr. Marsh laid down among other things, that respect for the liturgy is "diminished by the institution and operation of a Bible Society."

† The manner in which churchmen speak of their liturgy is sometimes to the last degree extraordinary. Dr. Mayhew quotes a Dr. Bearcroft, who in a sermon preached in 1744, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, congratulated his associates that "the word of God mightily grew and prevailed in New England according to the liturgy of the church of England."

eternal and unchanging interest? The question is not whether the ideas are always alike important, but whether the words do not lose by use their property of being a vehicle of thought, and cease to suggest ideas, either these or any other.*

III. The episcopal form of worship is faulty in its general plan. This is a matter for every individual's judgment, and if any one is not struck by the fact at once, it is not such as admits of proof. The service seems to us to be broken up into too many and too minute parts, and thus to lose that connexion, which is a virtue in every kind of composition. We should think it much better if it were more consolidated, that there might be to a greater degree a mutual dependence and coherence of the parts, and the mind not be continually arrested on the current of its feelings by the forms of closing one prayer, and introducing another. As it is, if the numerous prayers contain each of them what belongs to a prayer, the repetition must be not a little tiresome; if not, they are defective in themselves.—The arrangement is not happy. No good reason appears why parts of the service should stand in the appointed order rather than another.—There is too much of it. With a little variety of topics and expression, it might keep alive attention a much longer time, but what is at once so long and so unalterable has not the power to do this. Yet so overlooked was this radical blemish, that one scrap of devotion is piled on another at the end of the litany, as if the only object were to draw it out to a given length. Repetitions and redundances, omissions and defects must be looked for in every human composition; but they are worth avoiding when they may be avoided, and certainly so obvious mismanagement need not

* An illustration of this may be drawn from what most persons perhaps experience with regard to the Lord's prayer. The consequence of our familiarity with it from childhood, is, that it is only by an effort, and a strong one, that we can attach to its words the ideas for which they stand. We are never, perhaps, fully aware of its significance, and could a person be found who was unacquainted with it before, it would strike him, we doubt not, as possessing an eloquence and fulness of meaning, very partially perceptible by ourselves. In connexion with this subject we may remark, that when congregationalists, in attending on episcopal worship, imagine themselves impressed by the solemnity of the service, they would do well to consider whether it is not rather its novelty that impresses them; and whether all the while that it appears so striking to them, to whom it is new, it is not very fatiguing to the stated worshippers, to whom it is old. An unprejudiced churchman is as strongly affected by the simplicity of congregational worship, as a congregationalist by the pomp of episcopal; and both for the same reason, operating however not to the same degree on both,—that the ardour of devotional feeling ceases to be checked in them, by familiarity of the form of expressing it. There is a remark to this effect, if we mistake not, in some work of Mrs. Barbauld.

have had place, as that which introduces the Lord's prayer six times (as it may occur,) in the same service, and the Gloria Patri we know not how many.—The Psalms, containing as they do, the richest vein in the world of devotional thought and language, which wrought into the texture of the service would give it quite another character, are, by a most infelicitous disposition, transplanted into it in a mass, and with all their localities and personalities of meaning, appointed to be read in selections of whole chapters at once, by the whole array of worshippers. We are told that they are not used as part of the public prayer. We reply that they ought to be; and that we know no good reason, why they should be reserved from a use for which they seem almost designed, so fitted are they for all purposes of devotion, for another less definite use, in which, unskilfully applied to it as they are, they are very far less edifying.

IV. The episcopal service appears too formal to cherish the spirit of devotion, and too pompous to be a fit religious homage. What with the standing, kneeling, and sitting of the worshippers, the wardens with their staves and the clerk in his box, the change by the priest, of dress from surplice to gown, and of place from the reading desk to the vestry, from the vestry to the altar, and thence to the pulpit, the whole scene has a theatrical air, and very little congeniality, till habit has reconciled it, with the feelings with which an humble christian goes to worship. Nothing can be more striking than the contrast of this parade with the simple service of the primitive believers.* Some of the ceremonies are fantastic beyond all but popish example. They do not appear in their most offensive shape in places where there prevails a taste for simplicity in divine service; but wherever there is an inclination to pomp, nothing can be more accommodating than the church; and a friend, who attended episcopal worship not long ago in Quebec, informs us, that so little in unison with protestant ideas was the show,—the bishop sitting in idle state under his canopy within the rails, and the singing men

* The manner of public worship as late as the end of the second century is described by Neal (vol. 2. p. 407.) on the authority of Justin Martyr and Tertullian, to have been this. First, the scriptures were read; after reading followed an exhortation to the practice and imitation of what was read; then all rose up and joined in prayer; after this they went to the sacrament, in the beginning whereof the president of the assembly poured out prayers and thanksgivings, *according to his ability*, and the people said *amen*; then followed the distribution of the elements, and a collection of alms.

in their copes chanting* the service from above, that but for the familiar English words, he might have doubted whether he were in the protestant cathedral of Canada, or in the neighbouring chapel of Notre Dame.† The feasts and fasts, in the observance of which, christians find so much satisfaction, were instituted to conciliate pagans, as a father of the fifth century quoted by Mr. Sparks, (p. 77.) ingenuously or inadvertently hints. "Our Lord God hath brought his dead (martyrs) into the room and place of your gods, whom he hath sent off, and given their honour to his martyrs. For instead of the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus, are now celebrated the festivals of Peter and Paul, and Thomas, and Sergius, and other holy martyrs."

V. The episcopal service authorizes a rite not christian. We speak of the rite of confirmation, which has no decent show of scriptural evidence. Where the early preachers of our religion are said in the New Testament to have confirmed their converts, that confirmation in the faith, and that only, is spoken of, which is the effect of a better acquaintance with it, and of encouragements to hold fast the profession of it without wavering. Paul went with Silas "through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches," (Acts xv. 41.) in the same manner as with Barnabas he went "to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, *confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*" (Acts xxiv. 21, 22.) Nor are the texts relating to im-

* The homily on the time and place of prayer, expressly condemns chanting and playing upon the organ, as *sorely displeasing to God, and filthily defiling his holy house.* Book of Homilies, p. 294. Oxford edition, 8vo. 1816.

† In "Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy shaken," vol. 2. p. 343, is preserved an account of the form of consecration of certain bishops in Dublin, by the archbishop of Armagh, primate of Ireland, in 1660,—a valuable document to shew what a magnificence the church affected, even at a time when it had not ceased to be hard pressed by the puritans. Among other remarkable things, these words are the conclusion of an anthem, composed for the occasion by the dean of St. Patrick's.

• Angels, look down, and joy to see
Like that above, a monarchy;
Angels, look down, and joy to see
Like that above, an hierarchy.'

Does not the following, from another source, look less like a directory of public worship, than like the orders to the scene-shifters and orchestra in the prompter's copy of a German play? "After the dismissal of the congregation, a few moments will be allowed for mental prayer, that God will pardon the imperfection of the prayers that have been offered, and dispose the hearts of his people to obey his will. The sexton will then throw open the doors, and the organ will commence soft and solemn music, rising with the swell, and ending with the full organ."

sition of hands any more to the purpose ; for wherever this is spoken of in the New Testament as a religious ceremony, as Mr. Sparks with perfect accuracy remarks, " it always implies" as in Acts viii. 17. " a communication of extraordinary gifts," or, as in Acts vi. 6. " induction to some office." It were well if there were nothing worse to say of this rite than that it is unauthorized. But we fear that no good comes of the bishop's thanking God for having " regenerated his servants," i. e. in baptism, " by water and the Holy Ghost, and given unto them forgiveness of all their sins," and going on to " certify them by this sign," (i. e. by imposition of his hands,) of God's " favour and gracious goodness to them." In the view of this office, he who can bring to the altar rails the slender preparation of the creed, the Lord's prayer, &c. may go thence, if he believe his spiritual father, with the comforting assurance that his warfare is accomplished, that his iniquity is pardoned. It is a way to a quiet conscience too abrupt, we fear, not to be dangerous.—This is no trifling. The words of the office, if they mean any thing, mean what we have said. If not, they ought to be disused ; for they are supposed to be significant, and so deceive.

VI. It involves false doctrine.

False we call it. Disputed it is, at all events ; and therefore unfit to make a part of social worship ; for this is a duty in which christians ought to be encouraged to unite, and it is no gracious thing to try one who comes to put himself on our christian hospitality, by a doctrinal shibboleth. We are not prepared to say, that a religious community are obliged, out of tenderness to others' views, to exclude from their devotions any thing which appears to them essential to acceptable worship ; but we do say, that it is no matter of caprice, and that it is under a heavy responsibility that the decision, what is thus essential, must be made. The following are examples of false doctrine involved in the episcopal service.

1. The trinity.

This is supposed in different places. Particularly, the second petition in the litany is addressed to God the Son, the third to God the Holy Ghost, and the fourth to the " holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity," and great part of the same prayer or collection of prayers is offered to our Saviour.

2. The popish error of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacramental elements is certainly not discountenanced in the following passages of the order for the administration of the Lord's supper. " That we and all others who shall be partakers of this holy communion, may worthily receive the most precious body and blood of thy Son Jesus Christ."

"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life." "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

3. That baptism is a saving ordinance.

"Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate." "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit."*

4. That bishops are able to communicate the holy spirit, and confer the power of forgiving sins.

"When the prayer is done, the bishop, with the priests present, shall lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the order of priesthood, the receivers humbly kneeling, and the bishop saying, *Receive the Holy Ghost*, for the office and work of a priest in the church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; WHOSE SINS THOU DOST FORGIVE, THEY ARE FORGIVEN; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." Form and manner of ordering priests.†

These are samples of the service-book. We are accustomed to consider prayer as an awfully solemn thing. In this exercise, if at any time, we assuredly think that we ought to say what we mean. With a man, who, holding unitarian opinions, can use the litany as a prayer, or who, believing that no human power is competent to forgive sins, can ordain or be or-

* Dr. Wyatt calls the baptismal font *the laver of regeneration*, p. 37. In the church catechism, the child is taught to define the "inward and spiritual grace" in baptism, "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace." In the twenty-seventh article baptism is declared to be "not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby christian men are discerned from others that be not christened; but it is also a sign of *regeneration or new birth*, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God, are visibly signed and sealed." Nothing seemed wanting to carry episcopal pretensions the length of caricature, till Mr. Dodwell, as quoted by Doddridge, Lect. vol. ii. p. 373, started the idea, that "there goes along with the administration of baptism, if the person administering it be duly ordained, a certain immortalizing spirit, whereas persons dying unbaptized are not immortal;" that is to say in plainer English, episcopal ordination communicates the power of conferring immortality!

† We cannot enlarge on the idea that all this false doctrine is protected in the strong fortress of the prayer-book, but will rest it on the authority of Dr. Wyatt. "Forms serve as an unchanging standard of faith, always instructing the people, and acting as a barrier against the innovation of new doctrines." p. 31.

gained in the form we have extracted—we know not how to sympathize. We enter not at all into his views. We hope they are as just as they appear to us extraordinary.

VII. The book of common prayer contains improprieties of language.

We admitted that it is an advantage of preconceived prayers over extemporaneous, that care may be taken to exclude unsuitable expressions. In many instances in the episcopal service-book, this single advantage is waived. As it would be giving ourselves needless trouble to make out a list of such when it is done to our hand, we will give a specimen extracted from the fourteenth edition of the Protestant Dissenter's catechism.*

“*Uncouth and obsolete words and phrases.* ‘Prevent us in all our doings.—Let thy mercy *lighten* upon us.—Ordered by thy *governance*.—Thine *honourable* and *true* Son.—That we be *ful-filled* with thy grace.—Those things which we ask *faithfully*.—May do such things as be *rightful*.—For the *more* confirmation of the faith.—Through our sins and wickedness we be *sore let* and hindered.—Thy late *plague* of immoderate rain.—The spirit of *ghostly* strength.—Great *marvels*.—*Deadly* sins, &c.’

“Many also occur in the version of the *Psalms* read in the church, which is done from the *vulgate Latin*, (besides several gross mistranslations;) *e. g.* ‘Tush.—Fie upon thee, fie upon thee.—Thou art my *worship*.—He is an *wholesome* defence.—Blessed are the *folk*.—The time thou hast *plagued* us.—O thou *most highest*.—With trumpets and *shawms*.—We have wished you *good luck*.—How sweet are thy words unto my *throat*.—I will bless her *victuals*, &c. &c.’

“*Redundancies.* ‘Acknowledge and confess.—Not dissemble nor *cloak* them.—Pardoneth and absolveth.—Vanquish and overcome.—Worthily deserved.—Graciously hear us O Christ, graciously hear us O Lord Christ. (*See the end of the Litany.*) We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.’ *Communion Service.*

“*Want of Connection*; particularly between the *Address* and the *Petition*—‘Give peace in our time, O Lord, *because* there is none other that fighteth for us, but only thou, O God.—O God who art the author of *peace* and lover of *concord*, in knowledge of whom, &c. defend us thy humble servants, &c.—Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest *great marvels*, send down

* The extract which follows of course refers to the English copy of the prayer-book. In the American some few of the faulty expressions quoted are corrected; the rest stand.

upon our Bishops and Curates, the healthful spirit of thy grace.' In this last instance the connexion unhappily suggests, what the compilers cannot be thought to have intended, viz. that it is a marvellous thing for Curates, and even Bishops, to have grace.

"*Absurd or unintelligible.*" 'By the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation, &c. Good Lord deliver us.—Hast given us grace in the power of the divine majesty to worship the unity.—Those things, which for our unworthiness we dare not ask, vouchsafe to give us.—Thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father, Amen.'—In one of the prayers in the communion service, God is styled *Holy Father*.—But the rubric orders that on *Trinity-Sunday* this title shall be omitted; as if God was not *Holy Father* that day as much as any other.

"From this specimen of faults in the established Liturgy, it appears, that churchmen have not quite so much cause to boast of its perfection, and its superiority to extemporary prayers, even in point of *expression*, as might be imagined. And it should be considered, that in the latter case, improprieties, when observed, may be avoided: but in the former, the faults are established as well as the forms, and must be adhered to, even by those who perceive them."*

* There is so much good sense in the preface to the Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the public worship of God*, that in conclusion of our remarks under this head we will venture to transcribe some paragraphs of it.

"In the beginning of the blessed reformation, our wise and pious ancestors took care to set forth an order for redress of many things, which they then, by the word, discovered to be vain, erroneous, superstitious, and idolatrous, in the public worship of God. This occasioned many godly and learned men to rejoice much in the book of *Common-Prayer*, at that time set forth; because the mass, and the rest of the *Latin* service, being removed, the public worship was celebrated in our own tongue: many of the common people also received benefit by hearing the scriptures read in their own language, which formerly were unto them as a book that is sealed.

"Howbeit, long and sad experience hath made it manifest, that the liturgy used in the church of England, (notwithstanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers of it) hath proved an offence, not only to many of the godly at home, but also to the reformed churches abroad. For not to speak of urging the reading of all the prayers, which very greatly increased the burden of it; the many unprofitable and burdensome ceremonies contained in it, have occasioned much mischief, as well by disquieting the consciences of many godly ministers and people, who could not yield unto them, as by depriving them of the ordinances of God, which they might not enjoy without conforming or subscribing to those ceremonies. Sundry good christians have been, by means thereof, kept from the Lord's table, and divers able and faithful ministers, debarred from the exercise of

From a remark with which Mr. Sparks begins his third letter, we are led to suppose that he thinks better of the world than it deserves.

their ministry, (to the endangering of many thousand souls, in a time of much scarcity of faithful pastors) and spoiled of their livelihood, to the undoing of them and their families. Prelates and their faction have laboured to raise the estimation of it to such an height, as if there were no other worship, or way of worship of God amongst us, but only the service-book; to the great hindrance of the preaching of the word, and, (in some places, especially of late) to the justling of it out, as unnecessary; or (at best) as far inferior to the reading of *common-prayer*, which was made no better than an idol by many ignorant and superstitious people, who, pleasing themselves in their presence at that service, and their lip-labour in bearing a part in it, have thereby hardened themselves in their ignorance and carelessness of saving knowledge and true piety.

"In the mean time, papists boasted, that the book was a compliance with them in a great part of their service;* and so were not a little confirmed in their superstition and idolatry, expecting rather our return to them, than endeavouring the reformation of themselves: in which expectation they were of late very much encouraged, when, upon the pretended warrantableness of imposing the former ceremonies, new ones were daily obtruded upon the church.

"Add hereunto, (which was not foreseen, but since hath come to pass) that the liturgy hath been a great means, as on the one hand to make and increase an idle and unedifying ministry, which contented itself with set forms made to their hands by others, without putting forth themselves to exercise the gift of prayer, with which our Lord Jesus Christ pleaseth to furnish all his servants, whom he calls to that office: So on the other side it hath been (and ever would be, if continued) a matter of endless strife and contention in the church, and a snare both to many godly and faithful ministers, who have been persecuted and silenced upon that occasion, and to others of hopeful parts, many of which have been, and more still would be diverted from all thoughts of the ministry to other studies; especially in these latter times, wherein God vouchsafeth to his people more and better means for the discovery of error and superstition, and for attaining of knowledge in the mysteries of godliness, and gifts in preaching and prayer.

"Upon these, and many the like weighty considerations, in reference to the whole book in general, and because of divers particulars contained in it; not from any love to novelty, or intention to disparage our first reformers, (of whom we are persuaded, that, were they now alive, they would join with us in this work, and whom we acknowledge as excellent instruments, raised by God, to begin the purging and building of his house, and desire they may be had of us and posterity in everlasting remembrance, with thankfulness and honor) but that we may, in some measure, answer the gracious providence of God, which at this time calleth upon us for further reformation, and may satisfy our own consciences, and answer the expectation of other reformed churches, and the desires of many of the godly among ourselves," &c.

* King Edward, to satisfy the Devonshire rebels, wrote to them, "As for the service in the English tongue, it perchance seems to you a new service, but yet indeed it is no other but the old; the self-same words in English." *Dissenter's Catechism*, p. 48.

"I propose next to consider that part of the twentieth article, which asserts, that 'the church hath authority in controversies of faith.' This you pass over entirely; yet, if I am not mistaken, there is no one thing in which the episcopal church differs more essentially from Protestant churches in general. Few churches, I believe, assume, as a fundamental doctrine, the right and authority of deciding in matters of faith." p. 79.

We are afraid that the church is less distinguished than dishonoured by this claim; that it is a claim in which it mutually countenances, and is countenanced by, most of the sects in Christendom. Among dissenters the principle of toleration is indeed in better esteem, than when the presbyterian ministers and elders of London, convened* in provincial assembly in 1649, declared it to be "contrary to godliness, opening a door to libertinism and profaneness, and a tenet to be rejected as soul poison;" or than when a president of Harvard college† told our civil fathers, that "if ever toleration got footing among them, they might call its name Gad, for behold a troop cometh, a troop of all abominations." It has made some progress since those times, but it has yet great part of its destined triumph to achieve. Mr. Sparks exposes in this letter with great force the arrogance and futility of the attempt to establish, by the imposition of tests, a human authority over men's consciences, and the evil consequences which follow thence both to clergy and people; and concludes in the following strain of good sense and eloquence.

"With equal propriety might the bounds of philosophical, physical, and political science have been fixed in the time of king Edward, as a standard of religious knowledge. The king and parliament assembled had the same authority to establish certain sciences, and to decree, that no innovations or improvements should be made, as they had to settle the rules of faith in religion. They might have decreed, that the earth was immoveable, and the sun, moon, and all the stars were whirled around it once in twenty-four hours, that the new system of Copernicus was a dangerous heresy, which all the king's well meaning subjects should carefully avoid. They might have enjoined it as a part of the philosophy of the realm, that alchemy and astrology were founded on the true principles of nature, as might be proved 'by most certain warrants' of physical phenomena; and we should now be edified with treatises on the philosopher's

* Toulmin's History of Dissenters, p. 269.

† Oakes, in his Election sermon. "To authorize an untruth" says the simple cobbler of Agawam (Ward of Ipswich in 1646-7) "To authorize an untruth by a toleration of state, is to build a scone against the walls of Heaven, to batter God out of his chair."

stone, transmutations, and a universal medicine. We should have books to tell us what planets ruled at our birth, interspersed with appropriate figures of horoscopes, schemes of nativity, and positions of the stars. They might have decreed, that the schoolmen were the only rational metaphysicians, and that every college in the kingdom should make the categories, analytics, topics, and sophistics of Aristotle an essential branch of education.

“There would have been just as much propriety in fixing rules of belief on these subjects, as there was in drawing up the thirty-nine articles, and the formularies of the church, and setting them forth as a standard of religious faith. Newton, and Bacon, and Locke, would have been considered meddling dissenters from the established philosophy; but still, the force of truth would have been resistless, and would finally have prevailed. So it must be in religion. Error may be concealed and protected for a long time under the guise of forms, and in the mists of ignorance; but the light of truth will at length penetrate so flimsy a covering, and dissolve the cloud.

“It is said, that creeds have a tendency to keep schism out of the church, by causing all its members to think alike. This would be good reasoning, if the church were infallible; but on no other supposition. Unless it were infallible, there could be no certainty of its having the only true faith; and no church should claim authority to keep its members in ignorance and error to prevent schism. Milton, speaking on this subject with particular reference to the doctrines of the church, and the scheme of prelacy, observes, ‘If to bring a numb and chill stupidity of soul, an unactive blindness of mind upon the people, by their leaden doctrine, or no doctrine at all; if to persecute all knowing and zealous christians by the violence of their courts, be to keep away schism, they keep schism away indeed; and by this kind of discipline, all Italy and Spain is as purely and politically kept from schism, as England hath been by them. With as good plea might the dead palsy boast to a man, ‘it is I that free you from stitches and pains, and the troublesome feeling of cold and heat, of wounds and strokes; if I were gone, all these would molest you.’ The winter might as well vaunt itself against the spring, ‘I destroy all noisome and rank weeds, I keep down all pestilent vapours;’ yes, and all wholesome herbs, and all fresh dews, by your violent and hidebound frost; but when the gentle west winds shall open the fruitful bosom of the earth, thus overgirded by your imprisonment, then the flowers put forth and spring, and then the sun shall scatter the mists, and the manuring hand of the tiller shall root up all that burdens the soil, without thanks to your bondage.’* ”

“These remarks are but too applicable to fixed formularies of faith of every description. They are made and imposed without

* The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty; Prose Works, vol. i. p. 63.

authority ; and any attempt to force them on the minds of men is an encroachment on the liberty, and an insult to the understanding of christians. The apostles took upon them no such power. St. Paul enjoins the Galatians to 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' And to the Corinthians he writes, 'We have not dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy ; for by faith ye stand.' 2 Cor. i. 24.—Not by faith in creeds, for this would be giving up our liberty, taking upon us a yoke of bondage, and submitting to the dominion of others ; but by faith in the word of God, which all persons are free to consult,—and this freedom all must be allowed to enjoy, before they can be required to believe or obey."* pp. 105—108.

The article on a part of which Mr. Sparks is here remarking, runs thus ;

"The church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and *authority in controversies of faith* ; and yet it is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written, neither may it so expound one place of scripture that it be repugnant to another ; wherefore although the church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation."

It did not fall in the way of Mr. Sparks to state a fact which however is not unimportant. It is, that for the egregious folly, as it may seem, of this article, the earliest churchmen are probably not responsible. There is good reason to think that the first clause was not inserted till a subsequent age. It is not found in the forty-two articles of king Edward, nor in the original copy of the thirty-nine, subscribed by both houses of convocation, and now preserved in a public library at Cambridge. There is reason to think that it was not even in the copy authorized by parliament in 1571, but was afterwards surreptitiously inserted. An account of the affair may be found in Neal's history, vol. i. p. 207, or in

* The following remark of Watson seems to us to contain the whole doctrine of creeds as a reasonable man can receive it. "I certainly dislike the imposition of all creeds formed by human authority ; though I do not dislike them as useful summaries of what *their compilers believe to be true*, either in natural or revealed religion." Life, p. 203.

To the same effect Dr. Ware ; "As to the propriety of having a creed, no doubt, I believe, has ever been entertained. Unitarians have always claimed the right of every individual to have his own particular creed. What they have sometimes had occasion to object to, is, not that each of the several sects and denominations of christians should have its own creed, nor that any individual should have one, but that any, whether an individual or a body of christians, should insist upon their creed being the creed of others." Letters addressed to Trinitarians and Calvinists, p. 9.

a note to p. 306, vol. ii. of the bishop of Lincoln's *Elements of Theology*. However the truth may be, it is no longer of consequence except as affecting the wisdom of the early reformers, as the clause in question undoubtedly made part of the articles confirmed by act of parliament on the restoration.

We know not an example of more unanswerable reasoning, than that contained in Mr. Sparks's fourth letter *on the Calvinistic character* of the formularies of the English church. He begins with the statement, that of the *five points*, as they are called, of Calvin, namely, total depravity, special election, particular redemption, irresistible grace, and the final perseverance of the saints,

"The two first only are fundamental doctrines, of which the three last are necessary consequences. If all men have originally a corrupt nature, which renders them worthy of divine wrath and condemnation, and if God in his mercy have decreed, according to 'his everlasting purpose,' that a certain number of his creatures shall be rescued from this deplorable condition and finally be saved; it is a natural and necessary consequence, that all such persons are redeemed by a particular redemption, are effectually called, and will persevere to the end. The decree of election extends only to particular persons, and therefore the redemption it procures is a particular redemption; it is an absolute decree, and therefore all whom it calls, are effectually called; it is an immutable decree, and therefore all whom it restores to the condition of saints, must retain this condition.

"The fundamental doctrines of Calvinism, then, are total depravity, and election; and if these are found to be contained in the articles and homilies, I suppose it may be rightly inferred, that such are the doctrines of the church." pp. 110—111.

The first of these doctrines he finds in the following passages of the articles :

"Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk,) but it is *the fault and corruption of the nature of every man*, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, *whereby man is very far (quam longissime) gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation.* And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated."—Art. 9th.

"The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, *that he cannot turn and prepare himself*, by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God." Art. x. "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his spirit, *are not pleasant to God*, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ,

neither do they make men meet to receive grace;—yea; rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, *we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.* Art. xiii.”

And in the following of the homilies, which, by a vote of the convention in 1814, are required to be studied by all candidates for the ministry :

“ ‘When our great grandfather Adam had broken God’s commandment, in eating the apple forbidden him in Paradise, at the motion and suggestion of his wife, *he purchased thereby not only to himself, but also to his posterity forever*, the just wrath and indignation of God, who, according to his former sentence pronounced at the giving of the commandment, condemned both him and all his to everlasting death, both of body and soul;—he was cast out of Paradise, he was no longer a citizen of heaven, but a firebrand of hell, and a bond slave of the devil.’—*2d Homily concerning the death and passion of our Saviour.*

“ ‘Man of his own nature is fleshly and carnal, corrupt and naught, sinful and disobedient to God, *without any spark of goodness in him*, without any virtuous or godly motion, only given to evil thoughts and wicked deeds.’—*Homily for Whitsunday, part 1st.*

“ ‘Of ourselves we be crab trees, that can bring forth no apples. We be of ourselves of such earth as can bring forth but weeds, nettles, briars, cockle, and darnel.—Hitherto have we heard what we are of ourselves; very sinful, wretched, and damnable; *we are not able to think a good thought or work a good deed*, so that we can find in ourselves no hope of salvation, but rather whatsoever maketh unto our destruction.’—*Homily of the misery of man.*

“ ‘This so great and miserable a plague, if it had only rested on Adam, who first offended, it had been so much the easier, and might the better have been borne. But it fell not only on him, *but also on his posterity and children for ever*, so that the whole brood of Adam’s flesh should sustain the self same fall and punishment, which their forefather by his offence most justly had deserved.—As in Adam all men universally sinned, so in Adam all men universally received the reward of sin; that is to say, became mortal, and subject unto death, having in themselves nothing but everlasting damnation both of body and soul;—they were nothing else but children of perdition, partakers of hell fire.’ ”—*Homily of the nativity.*

For proof that the second fundamental doctrine of Calvin, that of special election, is avowed by the church, he refers to its seventeenth article :

“ ‘Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed, by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to

honour. Wherefore they, which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose, by his spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of his only begotten son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.

" 'As the godly consideration of predestination, and our election in Christ, is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well, because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God; so, for curious and carnal persons, lacking the spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

" 'Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise, as they be generally set forth in holy scripture; and in our doings, that will of God is to be followed, which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.' "

And to such expressions as these in the book of homilies; "whom God hath *appointed to everlasting salvation*;" "the undoubted children of God, appointed to everlasting life;" "sons of God, and elect of him unto salvation." *Homily on Alms-deeds.*

In conclusion of this argument, Mr. Sparks has collected an overwhelming mass of evidence to prove, that "the tenets of the reformers, who framed and adopted the articles of the church," accorded with those of Calvin. The inference is direct, that had they studied precision of language far less than they have done, it would be certain what was intended to be conveyed by the words in which their sentiments were formally embodied. "If the tenets of the reformers were not Calvinistic, it will be difficult to prove any thing by written testimony; and it is not manifesting much respect for their memory, to charge them with writing articles, and teaching doctrines, which did not accord with their sentiments."

A great majority of the clergy of the English church, both in Europe and America, is understood to entertain sentiments the opposite of those of Calvin. Yet to these Calvinistic articles, in entering on their office, they give, in the most solemn manner, their assent. "Can these things be, without our special won-

der?" The Englishman is the more leniently dealt with. He is required only to engage for the present, and "acknowledge all and every the articles, *to be agreeable to the word of God.*" The American must take on him obligations for the future; "I do solemnly engage *to conform to the doctrines* and worship of the Protestant Episcopal church in these United States." He formally renounces for himself the advantage of future inquiry, for any other object than to confirm his settled views; and engages forever to adhere to such sentiments, as the studies that have fitted him for deacon's orders have led him to adopt. Whatever learning and piety may do to illustrate certain obscurities in the religious system, he gives a pledge, that, as far as depends on him, such as the current belief is at present, such it shall ever be; and from the light that is kindling in a glorious blaze all about him, should a random ray fall on his averted eyes, he promises to shut them,—and *conform*.

It is a sad blot on the memory of one of the wisest men, that he gave all the weight of his great authority to the idea, that the articles of the church, are articles not of faith, but of peace, and that the precise solemn declaration, "I acknowledge all and every the articles to be agreeable to the word of God," meant only, I promise never to impugn them. He saw, (as a man of his penetration and philosophical freedom from bias, could scarcely fail to do,) that doctrines, which had had their day, were most expressly and unequivocally avowed in these articles; and, granting that no undetected selfish feeling swayed him, he was willing to do something to save the church from being deprived, in her time of need, of the services of men able and virtuous as he was. To this end he resorted to a piece of casuistry utterly unworthy of his name, and it is not the least of the charges that this rule of exclusion must answer to, that it was able for once to pervert such a mind as Paley's. His reasoning (that it should ever be said of him!) is as weak as his doctrine is depraving. His preliminary remark is indefensible. It is not true that, by requiring subscription to articles containing statements of doctrine, the legislature of the 13th Eliz. intended to exclude puritans from offices in the church. On the contrary, it was, long after, a favourite complaint of churchmen against that sect, that their dissent was owing to an unreasonable pertinacity, a narrow spirit of opposition about things of minor moment, unjustifiable when in the main points of doctrine all were agreed. This was the ground taken by churchmen. Whether solid or not is of no moment. It shows that they did not pretend by doctrinal tests to shut puritans out of the fold. But passing this, there is another incurable flaw in the argument. We admit the principle of this writer, that the

animus imponentis ought to govern the conscience of him who assumes the engagement. But we reject his answer to the question *quis imposuit*, as well as to that *quo animo*. Who imposes the test? Not the legislature of the 13th Elizabeth. The legislature of the 13th Eliz. is a nonentity. It is no more a party to the contract of subscription, than the first senate of Rome. The parties are, the candidate for ordination who subscribes or engages, and the existing episcopal church, which, as a condition of his assuming an office in it, requires his subscription or engagement. It is the existing church, whose security is concerned, and which thinks to promote its security by exacting such engagements. If it did not think them useful, it has the power to dispense with them.

The meaning of the existing establishment, then, is the *animus imponentis*. And what does it mean? If, as the words explicitly signify, to require of the candidate a bona fide assurance of belief, and promise of conformity, then he who enters into the required engagement without entertaining the belief so exactly described, or persisting in the conformity so positively contracted for, commits a fraudulent act. If on the other hand, the church means something different from what it seems to mean, what is to be said of a community which trifles with such measured words,—which unnecessarily afflicts tender consciences with a form of language which it *means to be unmeaning*; which holds out to the world the idea, that it is imposing a test of faith, when it is only enjoining a rule of forbearance,* and tempts its members to wonder at their guides, who give so unheard of a significance to language?

* As long as these are entitled not articles for trying the wits of clerks, and confounding those of laymen, but “for the avoiding of the *diversities of opinions*, and for the stablishing of consent touching true religion,” that is, by excluding dissentients from the pale, the remark of Burnet will stand good, that “they who subscribed, did either believe, or grossly prevaricate.” The following are the concluding remarks of the Bishop of Lincoln’s *Elements of Theology*.

“I have thus endeavoured to explain the meaning of ‘the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion,’ and to prove that they are founded in Scripture, and conformable to the opinions of the early Christians. All persons, when they enter into holy orders, or are admitted to any ecclesiastical cure or benefice, are required by law to subscribe these articles, with a design that those who are employed in the ministry of our established church, whether as curates or incumbents, should unfeignedly believe the truth of the doctrines which they contain. ‘The avoiding of diversities of opinion, and the establishing of consent touching true religion,’ was the professed object of these articles; and consequently they lose their effect, if they do not produce a general agreement among such as subscribe them. ‘I do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England,’ is the indispensable form of subscription; and therefore it behoves every one, before he offers himself a candidate for holy orders, to peruse carefully the articles of our church, and to compare them with the

But we do not suppose that this profligate evasion of a most solemn engagement has credit enough to be practised. They who, rejecting the doctrinal views of Calvin, profess assent or promise conformity to these articles, have persuaded themselves, we doubt not, that they admit an anti-Calvinistic interpretation; *admit*, we say, for nobody claims any thing more. But this gives us occasion to remark, how mischievous and futile a thing at once is this imposition of doctrinal tests. When the framers of the articles had gone through their work, they thought that they had built a fabric in which the blind doctrine of destiny might dwell securely and forever. But another generation found out that Calvinism was a mistake, and then the question came up, how heterodoxy and conformity should be reconciled. Silence was the first natural resort. They would say nothing of their heresy to others, and acknowledge it as faintly as possible to themselves. But out of the fulness of the heart the mouth will speak at length. And the deviation from the supposed church doctrine being notorious, yet the church standing too pleasant a thing to be needlessly relinquished, the experiment was thought worth trying, whether there could not be brought about a persuasion, that the established credenda were less strict than they had seemed to be; and forthwith the best selected words were found to be equivocal, and the best certified history brought into doubt. By and by came a sagacious man, who saw that the knot was too cunningly contrived to be thus untied, and that they who were working so intently at it, were but entangling themselves with its threads;

written Word of God. If, upon mature examination, he believes them to be authorized by Scripture, he may conscientiously subscribe them; but if, on the contrary, he thinks that he sees reason to dissent from any of the doctrines asserted in them, no hope of emolument or honour, no dread of inconvenience or disappointment, should induce him to express his solemn assent to propositions, which in fact he does not believe. It is not indeed necessary that he should approve every word or expression, but he ought to believe all the fundamental doctrines, of the articles; all those tenets in which our church differs from other churches, or from other sects of Christians. He ought to feel that he can from his own conviction maintain the purity of our established religion, and sincerely and zealously enforce those points of faith and practice, which our church declares to be the revealed will of God. This appears to me the only just ground of conscientious subscription to the articles; and let it be ever remembered, that in a business of this serious and important nature, no species whatever of evasion, subterfuge, or reserve, is to be allowed, or can be practised, without imminent danger of incurring the wrath of God. The articles are to be subscribed in their plain and obvious sense, and assent is to be given to them simply and unequivocally. Thus only can a person offer himself at the table of the Lord as his minister with safety; thus only can he expect to receive the divine blessing upon that course of life to which he then solemnly devotes himself."

and as he would not suffer it to bind him, he took a shorter way and cut it. Thus right views on one subject have gained a footing in the church, and with such fair shew of being guests regularly introduced, that conscientious men within the church make no scruple to do them reverence; and thus, after much delay, and by much management, and at great cost of plain dealing, and great distress to good men, the same object is at length effected, which, but for these nuisances of creeds, might have been accomplished in a fair open manner long ago. Truth will not be defeated by such feeble obstacles. If shut out from the broad, direct road where it would rather travel in daylight, it will force a path through briars and morasses, or dig a subterranean passage. It has an unconquerable instinct of activity, and onward it will urge a direct, or a winding way. Creeds are leaden shackles,—heavy, but flexible. As soon as they begin to gall, the sufferer finds means to stretch them, and they keep on to widen, till at last they fall off. They are nets, however industriously spun, of spider's web;—of power to confine the puny insect to be tortured, but the stronger prisoner breaks them through. They are mischievous, because they delay the progress of truth, and force it into a circuitous path which it would gladly avoid. And they are futile, because it will find a way, to whatever inconvenience it may put its followers. It were as promising an attempt to dam the ocean, or hold a comet with a kite-string, as to confine truth with such shreds as these. Such as has been their uniform effect, such, so long as they remain blended with human error, will it always be; one generation will believe, another will qualify and explain, and a third renounce them; and we would venture to predict on the general ground, even though we were far less authorized by recent appearances, that they who live some hundred years hence may read two volumes of elements, written in the sacred theology chair of the Andover institution, to show that the creed of that seminary frowns on the Assembly's Catechism, and that Bartlett and Spring were excellent Arminians.

The last two letters of Mr. Sparks are on *the doctrine of the trinity*. They contain an able statement of the argument, and happy illustrations of some difficult texts; and are particularly full on the subject of the two natures united in our Saviour. They are in effect a separate work on the subject, and as such we shall be happy at some future time to find an opportunity to recur to them.

From the glance we have given at its history, we may remark how unreasonable is the attempt made to excite a feeling of ve-

neration for the English church, as the representative of Protestantism. We have more than once heard it called "the oldest daughter of the protestant reformation." It was no child of the reformation; but the birth of an unblessed union between decrepid superstition and immature reason. Or if a daughter, it was like the thankless daughters of Lear. It had the spirit of a parricide. It drove the reformation out from its shelter to abide the "pelting of the pitiless storm," and we may thank a younger branch of the family, that it did not perish there.—The English church delayed the progress of the reformation. The mind rose, when the light of a better day shone upon it, but one step from its deathlike posture. Prelacy watched it, and weighed it down with a load of fetters, which to this day its convulsive struggles have not wholly shaken off.—It broke the spirit of the reformation. It was as noble, pure, self-devoting a spirit as ever religion kindled. But prelacy brought store of mitres, and corrupted it.—It oppressed the friends of the reformation. The best scholars, preachers, and men in the nation, deprived of their cures, forbidden to say a word for the great cause of protestantism, to which they had devoted their lives and were ready to resign them, shut up in English prisons, exiled to a precarious toleration on the continent, or living in contented destitution of almost all things in America, are vouchers of the dear filial love, which the church of England bore the reformation.

We say this not invidiously, (God forbid we should wish to wound,) but to meet an unmeaning appeal often made. Let the episcopal church in America make its election. If it considers itself a distinct body from that in England, let it answer to no charges except what affect itself; but then let it take such rank as its own deserts may warrant, and not claim a stock of merit bequeathed to it by English worthies. If on the other hand, it will stay itself on the reputation of the English establishment, let it be bold and consistent, and assume that reputation in a mass. This it may find perhaps to be rather a burden, than a prop. The history of that establishment is, to too great an extent to be subject of boasting, a history of selfishness, chicanery, and violence. From the time when Henry VIII. from a bad lust of power, organized a religious authority dependent on the royal will, or from a meaner passion threw off subjection to the papal see, till the passing of the needlessly cruel act of uniformity, under Charles II.—the infamous law which deprived protestant England in one day, of the services of two thousand men, the best boast of the protestant name, and with a more wanton severity exiled them beyond the reach of those, who would have stood between them and

starvation,*—it is a history of unrelenting strictness when in power, and of abject artifice and false professions in disgrace. Since then, through some changes of fortune, and with the loss of the power of persecuting, wrested from it by the growth of better principles in politics, it has continued,—doubtless with the exceptions which excellent individuals make in every such community,—to breathe the haughty, obstinate, exclusive and

* “Have you never read, what desolations *Laud* brought upon our fathers, whilst yet in your Church? How many hundreds of them were sequestered, driven from their livings, excommunicated, persecuted in the high-commission court, and forced to leave the kingdom for not punctually conforming to all the ceremonies and rites; and not daring to tell their people, that they might lawfully profane the sabbath by gambols and sports; and to publish from their pulpits the permission of the King to break the command of God—And yet you ask—‘Were your fathers ever persecuted while they continued in the Church?’

“Pray! what was it peopled the savage deserts of *North America*? Was it not the thousands of persecuted and oppressed families, who fled from tyrannising BISHOPS? Who not being suffered to worship quietly in their native country, as their consciences directed, sought a peaceful retreat from the rage of their Fellow-Christians, amongst more hospitable Indians.—To omit a thousand acts of cruelty, which through several successive reigns, our fathers suffered not only from, but when actually in, the Church,—Did she not at last, in a most arbitrary and unrighteous manner cast out at once above two thousand of them, excellent and pious Ministers, and abandon them, and their starving families, to great poverty and distress? To heighten that distress, did not your Church, ——— banish them five miles from any city, borough, or church in which they had before served: and thereby put them at a proper distance from their acquaintance and friends, who might minister to their relief? Did she not by another Act forbid their meeting to worship God, any where but in your own churches, under the penalties of heavy fines, imprisonments, and banishment to foreign lands?

“In consequence of these cruel Acts, were not vast numbers of pious clergymen, our forefathers, (once the glory of your Church) with multitudes of their people, laid in prisons amongst thieves and common malefactors, where they suffered the greatest hardships, indignities, oppressions; their houses were rudely rifled, their goods made a prey to hungry informers, and their families given up to beggary and want. ‘An estimate was published of near eight thousand Protestant Dissenters, who had perished in prison in the reign only of Charles II. By severe penalties inflicted on them, for assembling to worship God, they suffered in their trade and estates in the compass of a few years, at least two millions; and a list of sixty thousand persons was taken, who had suffered on a religious account, betwixt the Restoration and the Revolution.’†—Behold, the groans and the blood of myriads of oppressed Puritans, which cry beneath the altar, *How long, O Lord!* But you are deaf to all their groans—And with insensibility enough ask—‘Were your fathers ever persecuted?’—

“‘But the Presbyterian and Independent Churches have each in their day of power, discovered as much, and indeed more of that Spirit.’ Too

† Vid. Neal’s Hist. Purit. vol. iv. p. 554.

indolent spirit of an establishment; and the last act of public importance, by which it is known, was the refusing to the worthiest members of its communion release from a useless obligation, which it went against their consciences to take.

In this country, a country reserved as it seems by providence, for the last experiment whether man can bear and consent to be free, good, intelligent, and happy, whether those principles may yet prevail which have hitherto been kept down by his ignorance, his vices and his pride, it is not perhaps much to be feared, that institutions, the poor relic of a catholic and feudal age, the naked marrowless skeleton of the gaudy thing they were, should ever gain a permanent establishment. They seem to have no congeniality with the spirit of the times. They grow in an unpropitious soil, and when the sun is up, they will be scorched, and because they have no root will wither away. But if we should prove to be deceived in this,—if here too the best hopes of philanthropy were doomed to be again struck down, if hither too, religion, pure and undefiled, should be pursued,—pursued to her last retreat, where, for the sake of rendering a spontaneous obedience, and breathing an unfettered prayer, she was willing to sit at her board with famine, and lay herself to rest on rocks, we trust that the spirit will not be dead which spoke in the words of one of our own divines,—“if the land will not help the woman, let her go into another wilderness.”

much of that *bad Spirit*, it is acknowledged, they have *each* shewn. But surely there is *no comparison* betwixt the cruelties and oppressions of your Church, and of their's. Your *little finger has been thicker than their loins.*”*—Dissenting Gentleman's Letters, p. 82—84.

Acts of Parliament were the artillery of the establishment. Its small-arms discharged such missiles as these, in a tract ascribed to archbishop Parker, and quoted by Neal, i. 572. He calls the non-conformists “schismatics, bellie-gods, deceivers, flatterers, fools, such as have been unlearned-lie brought up in profane occupations; puffed up in arrogancie of themselves, chargeable to vanities of assertions: of whom it is feared that they make posthast to be anabaptists and libertines, gone out from us, but be-like never of us; differing not much from donatists, shrinking and refusing ministers of *London*; disturbers, factious, willful entanglers, and encumbrers of the consciences of their herers, girders, nippers, scoffers, biters, snappers at superiors, having the spirit of irony, like to audiani, smelling of donatistrie, or of papistrie, rogatians, circumcellians, and pelagians.”

* The English presbyterians and independents are not to be acquitted of a persecuting spirit, but their acts of oppression were of a much milder character. Cromwell's ordinance for ejecting *scandalous, ignorant and insufficient ministers and schoolmasters* (passed in 1654) allowed to the party ejected a convenient time for his removal, and reserved *three fifths* for the support of his family. There is no religious tyranny of his on record like that of the Act of Uniformity. The spirit of religious establishments is uniformly the same. The expressions of bishop Magee with regard to Unitarians do not yield in indecency to those of archbishop Parker respecting the dissenters of his day.

INTELLIGENCE.

British and Foreign Bible Society.—The 16th anniversary of this magnificent institution was held May 3d. The Report of the Committee commenced with the foreign relations of the society. In France their exertions had answered their most sanguine expectations. The duke d'Angoulême had expressed himself most friendly to the society and their objects, and the duke de Cazes had subscribed 1000 livres in support of their funds.—In the United States and their dependencies, Christians of every denomination, and even Jews, exhibit the most earnest desire to possess the Scriptures, and to support the societies by which they are distributed.—From Switzerland, Hanover, Saxony, Wirtemberg, Prussia, Denmark, Russia, Sweden, and Norway, the intelligence was of the most gratifying kind. Similar accounts had been received from the Ionian Islands, and from Athens, where Bible societies had been established.—The Eighth Report of the Calcutta Bible society, and that from Madras and its dependencies, furnished abundant proof of its advantages.—In China, though the jealous power of the government still operates to prevent the admission of the holy Scriptures; yet well founded hopes are entertained, that the exertions which are making will eventually succeed in diffusing the light of the Gospel over that vast empire. Under the direction of Dr. Morrison, the whole Bible has now been translated into the Chinese language, and the one thousand pounds voted by the Society for that object had been duly appropriated.—The New South Wales Bible Society had been zealously supported by all the civil, military, and ecclesiastical authorities in the colony, and its establishment promised the most beneficial results.—The reports which had been made from the South Sea Islands were most gratifying. The whole Gospel of St. Luke had been translated into the Otaheitan language, and three thousand copies had been printed and nearly distributed.—In Africa and America, the kingdom of Hayti, and the Western Archipelago, there was unquestionable evidence of the great and growing success of that holy cause in which the Society is engaged.

Dr. Adam Clarke introduced to the meeting two Ceylonese priests. These young men had been brought up in the temple of Vishnu from the time they were five years of age. About three years ago a translation of the Bible fell into their hands, and their faith in the worship of Vishnu was immediately shaken.

They happen to be of the class, or caste of fishermen in Ceylon, and were particularly struck with that part of the Scripture in which our Saviour tells the sons of Zebedee to follow him, and he would make them fishers of men. They became curious to see the people who had the means of sending throughout the world the glorious truths of the Gospel. They applied to the then governor, who was about to return to England, to be allowed a passage in the same vessel, but were refused. So great, however, was their desire to visit England, that they actually took a boat, followed the vessel to sea, and were taken on board whilst she was under way. The Governor having put their sincerity to sufficient proof, treated them with the utmost kindness; and on their arrival in England, Dr. Clarke took them into his house, gave them every instruction in his power, and eventually admitted them into the bosom of the church by Christian baptism; and he had now the pleasure of presenting them as the first-fruits of the British and Foreign Bible Society in the island of Ceylon.

American Bible Society.—There have been printed at the Depository of the American Bible Society, during the past year,

Bibles,	-	-	-	-	47,000
Testaments,	-	-	-	-	16,250
In the first three years,					
Bibles,	76,820				
Testaments,	24,000				
					100,820

One hundred and seventy-one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two Bibles and Testaments, or parts of the latter, have been printed from the stereotype plates of the American Bible Society, or on common type, or obtained for circulation since the commencement of its operations.

Several other editions of Bibles and Testaments have been put to press, among which is an edition of two thousand French Bibles, from the stereotype plates belonging to the Society.

There have been issued from the Depository, from the 30th April, 1819, to the same period in the present year,

Bibles,	-	-	-	-	26,800
Testaments,	-	-	-	-	14,393
Epistles of St. John, in Delaware,	-	-	-	-	259
Gospel of St. John, in Mohawk,	-	-	-	-	62
					41,514

In the three preceding years there were issued,

Bibles and Testaments,	-	-	55,122
Epistles of St. John, in Delaware,	-	-	467—55,589

Making a total of ninety-seven thousand one hundred and two Bibles and Testaments, and parts of the latter, issued from the Depository of the National Bible Society from its establishment.

Of the above Bibles, there were, German, 281—French, 227—Gælic, 71—Welsh, 1.

Of the above Testaments, 563 were Spanish. Of these, there were gratuitously sent to Valparaiso, 248—to New Orleans, 187—to Trinidad, 6—and to St. Croix, 50.

The remaining 72 copies have been sent to Societies, or disposed of to individuals.

Third Report of the Peace Society in London.—No new Tract has been added to its publications since last year. A new edition of Tract No. 3, consisting of 10,000 copies, one of No. 5, consisting of 5,000 copies, and 10,000 copies of the Second Report, have been printed since last year, making a grand total of 153,000 Tracts, Reports, &c. printed since the formation of the Society. The circulation of Tracts has been continued, and about 30,000 have been distributed and disposed of. An edition of 5000 copies of the Solemn Review has been printed at Pyrmont, in Germany; and these have been circulated through the hands of the booksellers in the principal towns in Germany and Switzerland, from the grand fair at Leipzig. Inquiries have been made for the other Tracts, but your Committee having taken some preliminary measures with a view to publishing in French and Dutch, have not yet thought it prudent to add to the number of Tracts in German.

The amount of Subscriptions and Donations ending June 14, 1819, is 494*l.* 11*s.* 8*d.* making the total receipts of the society 1073*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.* Between two and three hundred new Subscribers are reported since last year. Additional Auxiliary Societies have been established within the year at Worcester, Frome, and Dundee; and a Ladies' Association at Lymington, Hants. The progress of the Societies previously established, which have reported to your Committee, is encouraging; and some of them have been actively engaged in pursuing the objects of the Society. A Society in communication with your Committee has been established at Glasgow, from whose zealous and active co-operation your Committee anticipate the greatest assistance in this work. This Society has circulated some thousands of your publications, besides several editions of Tracts of their own

selection, and an excellent Address adapted for general circulation.

The accounts from America continue to give a favourable statement of the progress of Peace Societies, upwards of twenty being now formed on that continent. The Massachusetts Society in the year 1818 had distributed upwards of 8000 Tracts, and had received an accession of 246 new Members. The Society at New York had also circulated some thousands of Tracts, and is reported to be in a state of progressive increase. Besides these efforts, different individuals have exerted themselves with activity in the distribution of pamphlets. One individual, a mechanic in the State of New York, has published at his own expense 14,000 copies of the *Friend of Peace*, and 2,500 copies of the *Solemn Review of the Custom of War*.

New York Peace Society.—The operations of the Society during the past year, though not very extensive, have, your Committee believe, contributed in no small degree to the furtherance of their object. The exertions of the Committee have been chiefly occupied in the circulation of the best publications, tending to show that war is inconsistent with the Christian religion, and the real interests of mankind. Besides a large edition of the Report of last year, of "Tract No. III, The Question of War reviewed," a considerable number of the Tracts previously published by the Society, Letters to Governor Strong, and some minor publications, the Committee have distributed about 1500 of different numbers of "The Friend of Peace," and some hundreds of Tracts and Addresses, received from the London, Glasgow, and other Peace Societies. One hundred copies of the Report read at our last Anniversary, and one entire set and 25 copies of No. XIV. of the *Friend of Peace*, have been sent to the London Peace Society; 50 copies of the Report, and a few copies of the other publications, to the Glasgow Peace Society; 50 copies of the Report to the Massachusetts, and 50 to the Rhode Island, Peace Societies; 300 copies of the Report, 100 each of Nos. XIV, XV, and XVI, of the *Friend of Peace*, 6 Reports of the London Society, and 6 each of their Tracts I. to IV, and 24 Addresses of the Glasgow Society, were forwarded to Yale College, in New Haven, for distribution at the Commencement.

Rhode Island Peace Society.—There have been printed and purchased the past year, in behalf of the Society, 8736 Tracts, of which 8000 copies of the "Address of the Glasgow Peace Society" were attached to the Rhode Island Almanack. This mode of circulating information upon the subject of war we find

highly useful, and are happy to state that it meets the approbation of the friends of peace, both in Europe and America, who propose following the example. There have been distributed among the members of this Society 236 copies of the Friend of Peace, and 500 copies of the Second Annual Report. These Tracts have been favorably received, and several within our knowledge have been convinced by reading them, of the impropriety of shedding the blood of their fellow creatures, and have adopted different views upon the subject of war. There have been added to this Society the past year 20 members, which make our present number 114. Although our additions have not been great, yet we have reason to believe that the number of the friends of peace in this State is constantly augmenting.

A Marine Bible Society, has lately been established in Boston.

Methodist Episcopal Church.—The following is a table of the number of coloured and white communicants in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, in July, 1819.

	Whites.	Coloured.	Total.
Ohio Conference	28,361	713	29,134
Missouri	4,580	184	4,764
Tennessee	18,987	1,689	20,676
Mississippi	1,959	412	2,371
S. Carolina	21,059	11,586	32,646
Virginia	17,234	5,351	22,585
Baltimore	24,635	8,161	32,796
Philadelphia	24,635	8,161	32,796
New York	21,483	1,455	22,638
New England	15,149	163	15,312
Genesee	23,775	138	23,913
	201,750	38,073	246,924

Total in 1818, 229,627—Increase in 1819, 17,297.—There are 812 travelling, and more than 1000 local preachers in the eleven conferences.

Christianity in the South Seas.—The progress of the gospel in Otaheite and the neighbouring islands continues to be very encouraging. The missionaries give the following account of the publication and distribution of the scriptures.—“The impression of St. Luke’s gospel, in the Taheitean language, is now completed, viz. 3000 copies; and although we demand, as formerly men-

tioned, a quantity of cocoa-nut oil, as the price of each copy, to help in defraying the expense of printing more, yet the people manifest the utmost eagerness to obtain them. It is matter of much concern to us, that great numbers must go without any for the present. Many of the inhabitants of the Palliser's and other islands, to the eastward of Otaheite, have also demolished their idols, and become professed worshippers of the true God; and 320 of them have lately come to these islands in order to obtain books.—Some elementary ones have been given to them, but it grieves us that we cannot let them have more."

"We wish to carry on the printing with spirit. An edition of 10,000 copies of Luke, as many of Matthew, and of the Acts (which are in a course of preparation, and will be ready by the time we obtain paper) will not be too many for the urgent calls of the natives."

The Society for promoting Theological Education at Harvard College, held their annual meeting in Boston, on Tuesday, August 29, when they chose their officers and transacted the usual business of the society. The annual discourse was delivered on Sunday evening, August 27, at the church in Federal street, by the Rev. Dr. HARRIS, from Matthew xiii. 51, 52. "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

Ordination.—In Dublin, N. H. Wednesday, Sept. 6, was ordained, Rev. LEVI W. LEONARD, over the Church and congregation in that place. Sermon, by Rev. Dr. Ware, of Cambridge. The names of the other officiating ministers we have not learned.

TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

We have received from MICKROS the information we requested, and upon mature consideration find it necessary, for the reasons we before suggested, to decline the publication of his papers.

We hope our readers will think themselves compensated for the twenty days' delay in the publication of this number—for which we are unable to offer any adequate apology—by the sixteen pages extra which it contains. We will endeavour to take care that the same occasion of delay shall not occur in time to come.